

# **EARL WOOSTER:**

## **MEMOIRS OF A NEVADA EDUCATOR**

Interviewee: Earl Wooster

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### Description

Earl Wooster, born in Oregon in 1893, spent his early years in California. He attended the University of Nevada and prepared himself to become a teacher. Wooster's educational career, which began in Fallon, Nevada, spanned more than forty years.

Wooster, from his high school days to the end of his career, was never one to follow the beaten path. He was much more interested in making his own path or changing the old one. As a high school student at Fresno, California, he attacked the local school trustees for inadequate fire escapes on a building used for school assemblies. Because of his extreme language, the trustees asked Wooster to retract his statement, but since he considered the statement true, he refused to change his position. The controversy wound up in the courts of California. Wooster was refused a diploma. Later, the school board rescinded its action, granting him his diploma, upon which he entered the University of Nevada.

Earl Wooster began his public school career under principal George McCracken in Churchill County High School at Fallon, Nevada, in January of 1922. From 1922 to 1959 his interest in public education continued, and from 1959 to 1965 he served as executive secretary of the Nevada State Educational Association.

Mr. Wooster was not an armchair administrator, nor was he concerned with following the rules as set down in a book. Always more interested in the individual child and in the individual teacher than in the educational machine of school administration and organization, Wooster made his machine adjust to provide the most adequate preparation for life's work for each child in his system.

His rise in educational administration from the principalship of the Dayton High School in 1924 to that of school superintendent in 1955 is in some respects a history of public school administration in Nevada. At Dayton there were three teachers and fifteen students; in Washoe County there were about one thousand teachers and twenty thousand pupils when he retired.

From Dayton, Wooster went to more responsible positions—first to Wells, Nevada, as principal of its high school, then to Humboldt County High School at Winnemucca, and next to Reno High School as its principal. When the superintendency of the Reno School District Number Ten was vacated in 1944, Wooster was selected to fill the spot. With the reorganization of the school system in 1955, he became Washoe County's first school superintendent, a position he held until he retired in 1959. His account deals with many of the leading educators of Nevada since 1920.



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An Oral History Conducted by Mary Ellen Glass

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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## PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

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While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler’s meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

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For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber  
Director, UNOHP  
July 2012

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## INTRODUCTION

Earl Wooster, born in Oregon in 1893, spent his early years in California. He attended the University of Nevada, and prepared himself to become a teacher. Wooster's educational career, which began in Fallon, Nevada, spanned more than forty years. Dr. Harold N. Brown's introduction summarizes this career and evaluates the contribution Wooster made to Nevada education.

When invited to participate in the Oral History Project, Mr. Wooster accepted graciously. He was a relaxed and cooperative interviewee through the four taping sessions which were held in his office at the Nevada State Education Association headquarters in Reno, Nevada, in July, 1965.

The Oral History Project of the Center for Western North American Studies attempts to preserve the past and the present for future research by tape recording the reminiscences of persons who have played important roles in the development of the West. Scripts resulting from the interviews are deposited in the Nevada and the West Collection of the

University of Nevada Library. Permission to cite or quote from Earl Wooster's oral history may be obtained from the Center for Western North American Studies.

Mary Ellen Glass  
University of Nevada  
1966



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## SPECIAL INTRODUCTION

Earl Wooster, from his high school days to the end of his career in educational work, was never one to "follow the beaten path." Much more interested was he to make his own path or to change somewhat the old one. As a high school adolescent at Fresno, California, the account which follows shows that he attacked the local school trustees for inadequate fire escapes on a building used for school assemblies. For his vociferous language the trustees asked Earl to retract his statement. Since he considered the statement true he refused to change his position. The controversy between Wooster and the Fresno board of school trustees wound up in the courts of California. Earl was refused a diploma at Commencement. Later the board rescinded its action granting a diploma upon which he entered the University of Nevada. The above case is cited to show that when Earl Wooster thought his stand correct he was not one, even in his teens, to turn back.

Wooster began his public school career under Principal George McCracken in Churchill County High School at Fallon,

Nevada, in January of 1922. From 1922 to 1959 his interest in public education continued. From 1959 to 1965 he served as executive secretary of the Nevada State Educational Association

As one reads the following account of Earl Wooster's career in school administration, he is constantly reminded that Earl was not an "armchair" administrator nor was he concerned with following the rules as set down in a book. However, his own rules, the ones he lived by in his work, closely resemble those expounded by good writers of the period. Always more interested in the individual child and in the individual teacher than in the educational machine of school administration and organization as such, Wooster tended to make his machine adjust to the main purpose of the school as a public institution—namely, to provide the most adequate preparation for life's work for each child in his system.

Earl Wooster's rise in educational administration from the principalship of the Dayton High School, which position

he assumed in the fall of 1924, to that of Washoe County School Superintendent in 1955 is in some respects a history of public school administration in Nevada. At Dayton there were three teachers and 15 students; in Washoe County there were about 1,000 teachers and 20,000 pupils when he retired. As the magnitude of the problems grew in successive positions, so did Earl's ability develop.

From Dayton, Wooster went always to more responsible positions—first to Wells, Nevada, as principal of its high school, then to Humboldt County High School at Winnemucca, and next to Reno High School as its principal. When the superintendency of the Reno School District Number Ten was vacated in 1944, Earl was selected to fill the spot. With the reorganization of the school system in 1955, following the recommendations of the Peabody Survey, Earl Wooster became Washoe County's first school superintendent, a position he held until he retired in 1959.

The reader of the following autobiographical account of Earl Wooster's life will be fascinated by the numerous incidents that he describes. For example, there was the case of the school trustee's son at Wells, the case of establishing at Winnemucca the proper relationships between the grade school principal, Roger Corbett, and the high school principal (Wooster), the case of the trouble-making student at Humboldt County High that Earl brought to his office to thank him for a fine deed, and Wooster's fight to build Reno High School on its present site in the face of all kinds of criticisms—these stand out as master strokes in school administration and supervision.

Earl Wooster's account deals with many of the leading educators of Nevada since 1920. There were W. J. Hunting, Walter Anderson,

Chauncey Smith, Mildred Bray, and Glenn Duncan in state school administration; Bertha Knemeyer, Maude Frazier, and George McCracken as school district administrators.

The autobiography of a "school man" is interesting and worthwhile. Prospective teachers and school administrators will profit immensely from perusing its contents.

Harold N. Brown  
Professor of Education  
University of Nevada  
August, 1966

## EARLY DAYS

My parents were Rupert L. and Jeannette Wooster. I was born in Hillsboro, Oregon on January 14, 1893. I don't have many memories of my life there because we left Hillsboro in 1895.

The panic of 1893 wiped my dad out of his business, and we moved to Stockton, California. I went to the country school just out of Stockton through the fourth grade, and then we moved into Stockton. They used to have frequent floods in Stockton at that time, about every winter and spring they would have a flood, two or three floods. My father ran a dairy, and he was out delivering milk, caught cold and it settled in his back. So we had to get out of the dairy business.

We moved into Stockton, and I started the fifth grade at the little Jefferson Grammar School in Stockton. When I was in the eighth grade, they had rather a peculiar school setup there, sending all students in the eighth grade to our school. It was, I think, the beginning of the junior high school.

Then I went to Stockton High School, and I had rather a unique career there. I

was considered the bad boy of the school. Unfortunately I had a couple of teachers who, when anything happened, they blamed me. I was guilty of plenty, but not all. The principal got the idea that I was a liar so I had an experience that rather affected my whole life.

The principal gave out the word that I was supposed to be expelled at the next so-called offense. I had an English teacher by the name of Rose Schmidt who was in her first year of teaching. She had a very exaggerated pronunciation of her words and so I made a wise-crack in class. She went right on over it, never batted an eye, and overlooked it. I had sort of a conscience, so I thought—knowing that the faculty had all been told that I was supposed to be suspended—if she was that good, I would try to be equally as good. So I went into class the next day with a well prepared lesson. After about two or three days of this, she called me in and asked me what had happened and I told her. We were great friends from then on. It radiated throughout the school, so I had a little better break in high school.

At the end of that year, my father passed on, and we moved to Fresno, California. I attended my father's funeral with a pretty bad case of typhoid fever. We moved to Fresno two days after his funeral. We went down to Hanford, California, where my grandmother was, till I got well. Then, I started at Fresno High School. As you well know, after typhoid fever, people lose their hair due to the fever. So I started high school in Fresno about a month and a half late, without any hair. I at least attracted notice, if nothing else!

I started work when I was about twelve years old, and worked for three different newspapers in Stockton. When I was in the eighth grade, I used to go to work at four o'clock in the morning in a cellar right near the old Stockton channel. At the present time, if anybody worked under those conditions they would be horrified. I recall that we had one electric light globe that looked like a firefly.

I worked for the Stockton Evening Mail and had a rather unique experience there. I was out of school for a year, and I had a job as mail clerk there—that was a full-day job. At the end of the year when I wanted to go back to school, I talked to the owner of the paper and told him that I thought I could handle the job and go to school. He thought my work was satisfactory, and he was interested enough to let me try it. So, I had a rather busy year that year.

Then we moved out to Lodi. They had electric trains running out, and I used to get up at five o'clock in the morning to catch that electric train to Stockton and go to work, and then dish out to Stockton High School about a mile from town and go to school all day, and rush back to the newspaper and try to get there in time to get out the afternoon edition of the paper, and then catch the train home. I used to get home about seven o'clock at night. So, I had a rather full day; I did that for a full year.

Then we moved down to Fresno and I went to work for a newspaper there. Chester Rowell was editor of it. He was probably the best-known editor in California and one of the well-known editors in the United States. I recall very vividly I started first on a paper route there until I got on the staff working in the mailing room. We used to learn the paper routes by the people who didn't take the paper, rather than by the ones that did. I went to high school in Fresno and used to go to work at 2 a.m. Then I enlarged on my activities and got a job sweeping an office. Then I got a job working for a Scripps paper, working in the afternoon, so I was a pretty busy boy there for a while.

I might say, that as a youth, I was no angel in any sense. I had plenty of pep and virility and got into plenty of trouble in Stockton High School. I said that the faculty was against me, but I was not completely innocent of any faults. I do think they over-emphasized my weaknesses.

I recall one instance there on Halloween. They put a big wagon on top of the high school, and the principal called my dad and said I was the leader in it, and made some implications. His name was Ansel Williams. He was a very undiplomatic man. My dad's retort was that he was glad that I was a leader rather than a follower in it! He said that if Williams wanted to take any action on it, it was all right with him. But the implication that the principal made was really contrary to what should be done.

My dad always cooperated with the schools. If I got into difficulty at school, he took it up at home, too. So he supported the schools. Most people did at that time. You don't always find that now. You find people coming up threatening the school people if anything is done to their child. At that time, if the teachers did anything to correct a child,

gave them a spanking or anything, well, the child was apt to get one when he got home. That attitude has changed quite a bit.

In regard to my difficulties in Fresno, I led a rather exemplary life there. I had no incidents of difficulty in the school. I was very friendly with the principal; Liddeke was his name. He was a German, a very good disciplinarian and, I think, a very fine citizen. They had a very fine school board, too.

At that time, they used to have these interclass fights. In the spring of 1913, we were going to have one of these fights. It was all set up. They were really very asinine, but they were very dear to the hearts of the students—both girls and boys. The school board called it off late in the afternoon and the students were very angry about it. So they held a big meeting that night and went downtown and made speeches and everything. I was not a very active participant in the speeches that night, which was rather unique. After the meetings, I was working down at the newspaper; I had to go to work at two o'clock in the morning, so I went home and went to bed for a couple of hours before I went to work. Following this speech making, a group of students got into an automobile—about four or five of them—and went up in front of the principal's house and gave up a number of yells, "To hell with Liddeke." Liddeke had felt that something would happen, so he had the vice-principal there outside of the house watching.

The next morning, they called all of the so-called leading citizens of the school and I was numbered among them. The principal called me in and asked me about this, and I didn't have the faintest idea as to what he was talking about. I was completely innocent of it. He didn't know whether to believe me or not. He told me, "Earl, you have always been very honest." (I had run for student body president and the opposition had taken all the votes of

one of the classrooms and thrown them in the wastebasket, so they weren't counted. If they had been counted, I would have been elected. But they weren't counted, and Mr. Liddeke had called me and asked me what I wanted to do about it. I told him that if they wanted it that badly, they better have it. But, I didn't want a re-election. He didn't want to have a reelection, because he was afraid it would lead to a lot of trouble. Elections got pretty hot. So I told him that I wasn't that interested in it. He was greatly relieved, and felt that I was a pretty good citizen.) So, when he called me into his office on this occasion, he was prone to believe me, but he didn't know what to do about it, because the vice-principal had very definitely identified me as one of the people. The voice was the same, the movements were the same—everything—and he had very definitely identified me. So it put the principal in a very unhappy position.

They put us all in a room, and they had this vice-principal in there. They had about six of us in there and we couldn't speak to each other; we just had to sit there most of the day. So we were very angry about that.

They followed up that night with a meeting with the seniors. He was going to deprive us of some privileges. The vice-principal took charge of the room. The group was very angry about it. So angry, so angry that they were pretty much at a boiling point.

They had a student body meeting the next day. So I went in before the student body and made a speech in which I said that if the school board was so interested in keeping the bones of the students from being broken (they said that during these rushes that there would be broken bones, bruises and all this), probably they'd put some fire exits on the assembly hall. (We used to assemble about 800 students up on the second story with only one exit. It was a very, very dangerous

situation. Currently, they couldn't even have an auditorium built under those conditions, and certainly not inhabited by students. Practices were quite different then.)

So I made this speech, and it got into the newspaper. They had a big headline in the paper about it. And the school board was up there the next morning, going over things. They had a school board meeting that night. I was in a student play—a Shakespearean play—and was on stage. And they called me down before the school board—in this Shakespearean costume—and asked me to retract my statement. Well, the statements were true statements about the dangers of the hall, and so I didn't feel that I could retract them. Had they asked me for an apology, telling me at the time that they were considering (which they were) putting fire escapes in the hall, I would have been willing to apologize to them, saying that it was premature. But they didn't ask that; they asked me to retract. So they suspended me from school.

It created a terrific furor in the community, and the night of graduation, they almost had a riot when they gave out unsigned diplomas to the students. Some of the students put firecrackers in the heat vents. It was quite a turbulent evening.

Then an attorney in town offered to try the case for me before the courts. We took it into the district court, and then into the appellate court in the State of California. I was defeated in both courts and we dropped it. It took about two years to get it through the appellate court.

I went to the school board after the case went through the appellate court, and told them that they had been absolved and that I was considered the guilty individual. I told them that I would like to go to the University and that I'd like to get my diploma, if I could.

They said they had no hard feelings toward me. It never was a personal proposition; they'd be very happy to give me my diploma. One of them even offered me money to go to college on. So we had a very friendly meeting that evening.

Rather interestingly, after I got through high school, I took the teacher's examination. We could take them after we finished high school. I took the teacher's examination and passed it. They examined us in twenty-three subjects, and it was a pretty rigorous examination. I managed to pass it, but I didn't go to teaching. I went to business school, took up shorthand, and completed shorthand in three months. They wanted to make a court reporter out of me, but I wasn't too enthused about that. That was about the time of the 1915 San Francisco Exposition and I went to work for the Exposition's Commission down in Fresno; the Fresno County Exposition Commission. I worked there for about a year and then made up my mind that I wanted to go to the University.

I came to Nevada to go to the University. I came here through the fact that my sister taught school up at Floriston, California. She was just a young girl about 18 or 19 years old. And during the summer at that time, they'd run the school; they'd have vacation in the winter and run the school late into the summer.

There was a chap by the name of Peter McKinley who was going to school at the University of Nevada, an electrical engineer. He went up there to Floriston and worked; she met him and they became quite interested in each other. Once when he came down to visit her, he talked me into coming up to Nevada.

I had to have work in order to go to school, and I had worked in offices. So I walked into the President's office where they were trying to do some mimeograph

work, and the mimeograph machine had broken down. I went over and repaired it for them, and immediately they gave me a job. At least I was set up with a job. Later I went to work "hashing" in what they called the "gow house." I could work during the lunch time and it made a much more equitable day than working in the office. That took a lot of valuable study hours.

When I came here the buildings existing on the University campus at that time were Morrill Hall, where the headquarters were—the President's office—and Stewart Hall. It has the upper story taken off now, because it was unsafe; it's just a basement. There was a library; I believe the building is still there. There was the old chemistry building which, I believe, was built out of blocks purchased to build the state prison which they had hoped to locate at Fernley. Then the legislature did not see fit to locate it at Fernley, so these bricks were left over, and they used the bricks to build the chemistry building at the University. The old gymnasium was there; the Mackay School of Mines was there, and the mechanical building. There were also Lincoln Hall and Manzanita Hall and Mackay Stadium; That was the extent of the University then.

I recall very vividly when I got up on the campus. I got into town in the morning and I came up in a streetcar. There were streetcars in Reno at that time. One of the lines ran from Center Street right at the Southern Pacific Depot, down to Second Street, down Second Street and up Sierra Street, turned at Ninth Street and went up to the University.

I got off the streetcar and went up to the main office. They told me to go over and register at Lincoln Hall. So I cut across from Hatch station to the Lincoln Hall—right straight across. There was a wheat field out there, and there were some fellows sitting

out in front; some hardy characters. They had a senior rule at that time you couldn't cut campus. So I went down there, and they greeted me by taking me down and throwing me in the lake, which was a nice introduction to the University of Nevada. I learned very rapidly what some of the rules were! We got along, it was all in good fun; they were all very nice chaps. After they threw me in the lake, they welcomed me and offered to do anything they could for me. They helped me out and did everything possible.

There again, they used to have these student interclass fights between the sophomores and the freshmen. Here I had come up on the train that night and been thrown into the lake that morning, and that night, they had a student interclass fight that kept us up all night. In one of the fights they had, they used to fight all over town. Then, they'd always have a freshman dance, and the sophomores would always try to break up the freshman dance. Of course, we didn't have automobiles at that time; we'd go out on streetcars. We used to go out to Moana or we'd go out to Sparks. Or, we'd try to get out to Bowers if we possibly could, if we could locate enough cars, or a hay wagon to get out there. Then they would get this ill-smelling liquid and put it into guns and shoot it at you, so that it was like you invited a few skunks to the party. They had some terrific conflicts.

I remember that we had one dance in Sparks. F. M. Husky Young was a freshman at that time, and they pulled him down the steps. Husky had a very thin skull and he was unconscious for about two days after that. He also played football, and once or twice in the season he'd get hit in the head, and be unconscious for a day or two. So they finally made him quit playing football.

Getting back to the University, the Lincoln Hall boys would take all of the fellows down

to the gymnasium and have an initiation for them. I recall very vividly that they took us down there and then had a blindfold race. Then they got a lot of fly paper and rubbed all over us and turned the hot water off in Lincoln Hall. Then we'd have to run naked from the old gymnasium all the way to Lincoln Hall, and then try to get yourself clean in a cold shower. The initiations were a little rough.

Then they had a fight on the flag pole, which I noticed (when I was on the campus the other day) was cut off. It used to be a very high flag pole. It stands about twenty feet high now. It had two poles to it, you went up thirty feet and they tied another pole to it and it went up thirty feet more and, believe it or not, they used to have an interclass fight on that flag pole. It was the most amazing thing that nobody got killed. They got up on that flag pole battling each other; kicking in the face and everything else! It was the most amazing thing! They finally cut that particular fight out because it was dynamite!

In the social events, there were only two sororities on campus—Tri Delt and Pi Phi—and the rivalry between the two sororities was very keen. There was only one national fraternity on campus—Sigma Nu. There were the forerunners of SAE and ATO; I forgot the names of the chapters. I still have the fraternity pin; from the old local Phi Delta Tau chapter. I was initiated and helped to get the ATO chapter at the University.

They would hold their social events and dances in the old gym. All the University and everybody went to the dances. They were really very nice, friendly affairs. Students would turn out in numbers for social events because they didn't have as many activities as they have now. And whenever they put on a dance or anything, it was really something. Everybody turned out for it and everybody dressed up; they wore long-tail coats to

the formal fraternity and sorority dances. Everybody dolled up, .they took them quite seriously, and the conduct at the dances was very good. They had no drunken brawls. Mackay Day got a little rough because they'd dress up in miner's clothes.

Most of the events were very good. A girl would never go into a bar at that time; the boys did. The whole tone of social activity was very high and they had a very good time. Everybody knew everybody else; they all spoke to each other and they held to their campus rules very religiously. The attitude between faculty and students and between students and different elements of students was very good. It was a pleasure to go to the University and we got a lot out of it because the instruction was good.

A great number of the students were working their way through college. They were quite serious about getting an education. They were full of the devil, they had fun and pulled pranks, but they were also serious in their intent and purposes. As I say, most of them were working their way through. The elections, of course, were campaigned very hard. The friendship after the election was very good. The student body progressed quite well.

The president at the time was a man named Hendrick. He was a long way from being a popular president. During the war they fired Hendrick and got Dr. Clark, who had a long tenure at the University. He was a very fine president, a very friendly man. He mingled with the student body, so all the students knew him. I had a very high regard for Dr. Clark; he stood for good scholarship. He was also a great tennis player. He was interested in both the social and athletic activities, plus being interested in their academic affairs. I thought that he was a very outstanding president.

President Clark had a very outstanding wife. Mrs. Clark was a very fine person; she had a keen mind. She belonged to several women's organizations in town. And she contributed a lot to Dr. Clark. I've always felt that an outstanding president needs an outstanding wife because a wife plays a very big role in the attitude toward the president. She got along well with the women of the community. She belonged to the Monday Club, which was a very prominent club at that time in the community and she joined in the activities. She was quite outspoken on things, but was sensible in getting along with people. I have always had the highest regard for both Dr. Clark and Mrs. Clark.

We had a lot of students who went on to higher pursuits. When we came back from the war there was a hard core of us that had been in the service and we had been kind of separated from the rest of the students. We were a little older, we had had a little wider experience than the other students. There was a little wall between us. We broke it down fairly well.

I, of course, think of many of my own personal friends at that time. One of my friends was Harold Wahlman, who went down to California and became a doctor. He became quite an outstanding eye specialist in California. And Tom Hobbins was an engineering student. He went on with the Bell Telephone Company and was slated for the presidency on the West Coast, but he had a nervous breakdown and then went into a lesser position, and went on with the company. He retired about three or four years ago.

In the early days before I got there they had two or three outstanding mining engineers. Roy Hardy was a graduate of the University of Nevada who became quite a well-known mining man. You could go

through the list of prominent people in the different communities in the state.

One chap I went to school with, Bob Griffiths of Las Vegas, has been quite a prominent citizen in that area. He was quite a character while he was in school, but make quite a business in Las Vegas. He was there in the early days. His father tore up the old Tonopah-Las Vegas Railroad, and reclaimed it and got the materials out of it. That was an interesting old narrow-gauge railroad that ran from Las Vegas to Tonopah, and from Tonopah to Mina and from Mina to just east of Fernley, a little railroad town there that the branch ran off from Fallon.

I was trying to think of some of the other people there. We had a character we called "Tough Guy" North, who was killed during World War I.

Following the World War, they built the Clarence Mackay Science Building up on the campus. I recall attending the dedication of that. It was in 1930 when that science building was dedicated. As the enrollment went up, of course, it became inadequate. But it was considered at that time to be a very fine science building.

I should mention the name of Dr. Hartman, who was a physics professor. He was really a tough professor. He was hard, but very, very fair. All the students who took physics from him loved him. They made him president of the University later on, and he was a very poor administrator because as a teacher he had been meticulous in everything. Then when he became president, he tried to do everything himself instead of delegating. He practically broke himself down. He actually did; he died at a much earlier date than he should have, because he tried to do all this. There is no question about the man's integrity, but as a president, handling an organization of that size, you have to delegate authority and he was

not able to do that. He couldn't jump from a long time as a professor into the presidency. He didn't have time to develop the ability to delegate. He was very well thought of and very well liked by his students.

When I went to work and started my under-graduate studies at the University, I took English, and the professor then was named Professor A. E. Hill. (They had two Professor Hills there—one was head of the department and the other was a professor—and I took work under the professor.) He asked us as a beginning assignment to write a book review. I reviewed a book on sociology written by a professor from the University of Chicago. I got called into his office immediately thereafter, and he wanted to know how I ever happened to read that book. It happened that it was written by a very dear friend of his. So we became acquainted immediately.

I was always very interested in Dr. Hill. Many people didn't like him, but I liked him. He had a very dry sense of humor. He'd stand up with his pince nez glasses on his nose, rocking on his toes, and have some of the rarest wit you'd ever want to find. Some of the people overlooked that, but I appreciated his wit and got along with him very well. Just two or three years ago, I threw away the themes I had written. I enjoyed the comments he made on them. He made some very unique and clever comments on the themes that we'd write. I enjoyed him a lot.

The University of Nevada, at that time, had about 300 to 350 students. It was a very, very friendly institution. The professors were very friendly toward the students.

I think one of the outstanding professors at that time was Peter "Bugs" Frandsen. They called most of our professors by nicknames. Students came from all over the coast to take biology under Peter-Bugs because he was

outstanding, especially if they wanted to study medicine. A very dear friend of mine came up here from Oakland to take work under him, because he told me they were able to get into medical school if they took work under Peter-Bugs. He had been offered the chair of biology at Harvard, and the chair at California, and had turned them down. And the reason was because he liked to live in Nevada, where there weren't too many people.

I recall one day long after World War I, there was a fraternity man who happened to belong to the ATO, a west-coast man. There was some event at the University. We were standing and talking, and we just happened to be where Peter-Bugs was. The ATO man got to talking about the wonderful real estate possibilities in Nevada and how it could increase population. I recall very vividly Peter-Bugs standing there, and kind of scratching his head and shaking his head and saying, "Well, I don't know what I'll do if that happens. I stay because there aren't many people up here. If there are a lot of people here, I don't know where I'll go." He was very sincere about it, and he showed pretty much the attitude of the professors at that time.

I was taking a course in economics—my major was economics—from a Dr. Adams. Dr. Adams thought that if you really wanted to understand economics, you should understand evolution, and the best way to understand evolution was to take a course in biological evolution. So, he suggested to me that I try to get Peter-Bugs to set up a course in biology. So, I went to see Peter-Bugs and talked to him. He said, "Well, if I get five students, I'll set up a course." So, I got the five students, and he set up a course. Now, that was extra work, and I think it shows the attitude of the professors then. They were trying to serve the students. If they had a need, they tried to serve it.

The same was true of Dr. Young in Psychology. Mrs. Wooster worked a half-day as stenographer downtown during her school time. It was a long half-day that she worked. She was minoring in psychology, and she couldn't take a needed course. Dr. Young set it up so that she could come to his home once a week, and he'd give her that course at home, because she couldn't take it in the daytime. And there again, it exemplified the attitude of the professors. He thought she was a good student, an earnest student and he was willing to take one night a week to give to her the course, at no charge whatsoever, so that she could complete that course in psychology.

We had other professors; I remember "Geology Jones," we called him. I was privileged to take work in Latin from Dr. J. E. Church, and got to know him quite well. There was Jeff Boardman. They called him Jeff because he closely associated with "Geology" Jones, and Jones was tall and slender and Jeff was a little short fellow. That was in the days of the paper comic "Mutt and Jeff," so they called Boardman "Jeff" Boardman. Jeff was quite an outstanding man, a very fine engineer. He trained a great number of Nevada engineers—engineers who went out through the world in surveying and things of that type. He took them on field trips, and there again, exemplified this same type of thing.

Prior to the War, the school was rather slow moving. I recall very vividly the night that World War I was announced a bugler came up to Lincoln Hall about twelve o'clock at night and blew the "call to arms." I think every man in the dormitory "hit the deck!" We were all excited about it. Some of the boys enlisted; most of us finished out the school and then went into the service. It was rather interesting at that time that college men, instead of trying to get commissions, all went into the service as buck privates, or

on almost any area of military endeavor that they were interested in. Many of them went into engineering. I finally ended up in the 23rd Engineers, which I called the "pick and shovel" engineers. But, the attitude was that the country was in trouble and here was a chance to serve. They didn't think of trying to serve themselves first. They thought of serving their country, and they went into what they could. First I went into the Medical Corps because I couldn't get into anything else due to my eyes.

When we came back to the University after the War, conditions had changed. We were now in the "roaring twenties." I think that it is true of every war that the attitude after the war changes considerably over the pre-war attitude. Things were moving a little slower before the war, but then the crescendo was stepped up considerably. But we still had some of the very fine professors, and it was a small student body, a well-consolidated student body, with the attitudes that were very fine. Dr. Hall, Dean of Education, did an outstanding service to the University and to students in education when he secured the cooperation of the Reno School District and introduced student teaching as part of teacher training at the University. Dr. Traner, who later became dean, was an outstanding member of the education staff. The Traner Junior High School is named after him.

I get a little disturbed at times now with the extremely selfish attitudes of many people; not all people, there are still many, many fine people in the world, and many, many fine students in the university and in the high schools. We sometimes forget that we hear about these poor students of these hoodlums. We forget that there are still many very fine young people.

Following graduation, I went to work down at the Nevada State Journal. They sold

the Journal at that time, and the new people fired the editor. I was in line to be fired, and they cleaned out the whole works at that time. I went to work for the Reno Evening Gazette. I went into a unique position, in that one of the reporters on the Gazette, one of the long-time reporters, went into another type of work. He went into it on an experimental basis, and if he didn't like the type of work, he'd come back. And if he came back, I'd be fired, because there wasn't room for the two of us. Well, he came back just about the end of August, so, I was out of a position.

So, I went back to the University and took up education. I went that semester. I took two courses in student teaching and about twenty hours of work, including the two courses in student teaching—one in English and one in history.

I recall very vividly my first day of student teaching when I walked into the history class at Reno High. I thought I was well prepared, and in twenty minutes I had completed everything I knew and I turned it back to the professor. He laughed, and came up and finished the class. After the class was over, he laughed and said, "Well, young man, within two more teaching periods, you won't have time enough in a period!" And, that was true, I learned how to handle questions; I learned how to utilize the work better, to get the students more involved in it. So, from that time on, I didn't have time in the forty or forty-five minutes.

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## MY LIFE WORK: FIRST PHASE

I recall very vividly that when I went out to Fallon to apply for the position, I had to go out by railroad. Well, I didn't have to, you could drive out, but it was a long, extremely difficult trip driving out. The roads were poor—you went over an old railroad bed going out there and when you got out past Fernley, the road was powdered dust. In the wintertime, it was a long way from dust; it was mud and it was an extremely difficult trip. I didn't own a car at that time, so I had to go out by railroad. That wasn't the shortest trip in the world, either!

I remember down in front of the I. H. Kent store in Fallon, there was a great big mud hole. They called it Creehore Lake. Creehore was the city engineer. The streets were muddy. I was not too long from all the mud in France, and I recall very vividly that it kind of shocked me when I saw all that mud in Fallon. But I thought that I could live this down, and did.

George McCracken was principal at Fallon when I started teaching there. He had a school of about 300 students they had had lots of trouble in the school with discipline

problems, and George was brought in to solve those discipline problems—which he did in a hurry. I got there in mid-semester and was able to work with him.

People would faint in this day and age if a new teacher went out to teach as I did. I taught English, algebra, arithmetic, speech, and commercial geography, and I was supposed to be advisor to the student council. I handled the plays, and then the person who was handling the year book got into difficulty with it, and so the year book was turned over to me. So I had a pretty full schedule that first semester of my teaching! I question how good a job teaching I did, but we did have a lot of fun and I probably learned a lot more than the students.

On top of all this, they had a irreconcilable student in the school. He had had an dishonorable discharge from the Navy. We had a vice-principal in the school who was intent in trying to see that this boy was expelled from the school. Principal McCracken and I happened to get along very well with him. The first day I taught, he tried me out in

study hall, and I knew it. I called him in after school. I told him it was not punishment, I just wanted to have a chat with him because I'd have more time to talk after school. He came in and I looked at him and said, "You were in the Navy, weren't you?" And, he said, "Yes," I said, "I was in the Army. Is there any use in our fighting now, the war is over?" He looked at me and smiled and said, "No." And I said, "Well, I guess we can get along." That's all I said to him. And we had no difficulty getting along. So he was turned over to me to usher through school.

I finally got him to the point of graduation, and I thought this was a rather interesting commentary. He liked to drink, and so the night of graduation he secured a quart of bootleg liquor someplace. He came up to me and said, "Professor, I have a bottle of liquor; let's go out and get drunk." So I said, "Listen here, I want to have a little chat with you." There's no use talking to a boy like that telling him he can't. "If you want to get drunk, you do it after the graduation exercises," I said. "You don't realize that if you drink now and come into the exercises under the influence of liquor, you'll ruin the graduation for all of your fellow students." And, that really got to him. He looked at me, and said, "Professor, I'll promise you that I'll come up there sober. I won't take a drink beforehand, and if I go out afterwards, that's nobody's business but my own." So I guess we saved the graduation that way through talking to him. You get some of those interesting experiences with the students.

One of the prominent citizens in Fallon was I. H. Kent, who was pretty much of a power there. The farmers were in rather bad shape at that time. Right after the war they were very prosperous and they failed to do the thing they should do—spend their money on improving their farms. Someone came in with

an oil venture and the farmers put all their money in oil stock. When prices went down after World War I, they were caught in a jam. I. H. Kent operated and was head of the I. H. Kent company. He improved his company, and he carried many of these farmers on credit. He was bitterly hated by many of the farmers, but I. H. Kent was a very fine man, and he wasn't given credit for the things he did. If he did anything wrong, that always got a lot of publicity, but if he did anything right, nobody ever heard anything about it.

Alan Bible, the present senator's father, was a very fine man. He ran a store there at the time, and was very well-liked in the community. Carl Dodge's father was also there at that time. Carl has been senator from Churchill County for a number of years.

Edith Frisch taught commercial in the high school. She went to Carson and taught, and they named the Edith Frisch elementary school after her, about 1926. I started going with Mrs. Wooster when she secured a position teaching out there in Fallon in 1923. We started going together and were married in 1925. That was quite an event in my life.

When I was a teacher in Fallon in January of 1922, I went out there for the magnificent salary of \$125 a month. When Mrs. Wooster went out there, she went out there at a salary of \$115 a month. Prior to going to the University, she had worked as a secretary in Elko and received \$125 a month. So after four years at the University, she went to work for \$115 a month.

But of course they didn't take retirement out of our pay and we had no medical or health insurance out of our pay. We received all of our pay, and were able to spend all of it. And then, our money bought more, although when I went to teach, and when Adele went to teach, we still were in an inflationary era right after World War I. I recall very vividly I

brought four shirts when I went to work, and they cost me \$6.50 apiece. They were good shirts, but it shows that the prices of things were high. A suit cost about \$75.00. Prior to World War I, you could buy a good suit for about \$25.00. So that was an inflationary period. The \$125 a month salary didn't follow the inflation very well, and it was very difficult to get along on it. But at that time, too, the teachers boarded around in various homes rather than living in hotels or motels. Or occasionally teachers would live together. For instance, when I went to Fallon, there four of us got together and rented a house and hired a cook. We had an English cook, incidentally, who was quite a character. We set up devices of that type to be able to get along.

In 1924, I went over to Dayton as principal in the high school. There were three teachers and fifteen students there. It was rather a unique setup. In those days, the Clerk of the Board generally was a person who wanted to feed or board the teacher, and I had to board with this woman who dyed her hair a kind of a pink. She ran a little store downtown with a little restaurant, and was always too busy to have time to prepare food, so I used to leave town on weekends to try to fill up enough to last me through the week. I rented a room across from the school from a very fine elderly woman; she also acted as janitor of the school

In the early days, the people going to California, the 49er's or the other people going through, used to stop off at Dayton, or go up the creek toward Virginia City. One of them fooling around there dug out a gold nugget and started a gold rush. Eventually they went up as far as Virginia City and the silver was discovered there.

Two or three interesting things happened to me at Dayton. One of them was when I went into the school building and started going over it after I got over there. I

discovered a closet off the principal's office that was filled with paper—notebook paper. They had enough in that closet, I figured out, to last them fifteen years! The reason that it was all there was that the salesmen used to come through and they'd get a lot of orders. Then the principal would buy the paper or supplies for the schools, and the salesman always offered a ten percent refund to the person that made the purchase from them. So somebody there had purchased enough paper to last them fifteen years, and got ten percent kickback on it. I called the board together and that type of thing was ended immediately.

Another very interesting item was that 1924 was a dry year, and we had no supply of decent water. There was scum on the reservoir up the hill toward Virginia City that they got water from. So we had to get a well. All the well and drilling outfits were busy and it was impossible to get one, so we had to (they hadn't dug many wells in Dayton) consider digging a well. So we got into it. We didn't put it out to bid; we discussed it with people in town there. Finally, we found a man to dig the well. So I asked him what it would cost to dig the well. He said, "Well, if you give me the gold, I'll dig the well." So he dug the well for the gold that he could pan out of the dirt, and we got a very fine well out of it. We put this in and we had a good water supply for the school year.

Another interesting thing. We used to have the basketball teams come in and play basketball from out in the state. It was rather interesting to see those boys come in and flush the toilets. They weren't used to flush toilets. So whenever we'd have a basketball game, we'd count the procession of these youngsters running in and flushing toilets because they'd never seen them. It was quite a unique experience to them.

I can't say that a school with three teachers and fifteen students trying to teach all the basic subjects (of course, we couldn't teach shop or any course of that type), was a very fine educational institution. I was forced to teach chemistry and physics. I had had chemistry and physics in high school, but had had none of it in college, and I was supposed to teach this along with geometry, algebra, and any other subjects that some of the other teachers either didn't want to teach or couldn't teach. It can't say that the students got the best education, but they did get one thing out of all this. The teachers knew so little in some areas that they had to ask the students to help them out with it, and in doing that they developed a lot of resourcefulness on the part of the student. So it wasn't quite as bad as it might sound, because we developed within the student a sense of resourcefulness. They did work that had some certain values to it that I think sometimes they don't get now. If you had a bright student, you had him do a little helping and it helped develop his abilities, so that also wasn't quite as bad as it sounded.

Certainly the teachers were not all well qualified. I think our social studies was well covered. But I had had just high school algebra and geometry, and I had to teach algebra and geometry, and science and everything else. I learned a lot; how much the students learned, I don't know. We had a very poor commercial teacher, but we taught commercial subjects. The English teacher was a graduate of the University of Nevada. She was a very, very capable English teacher there.

Following a year in Dayton, the state superintendent offered me a position out at Metropolis, Nevada. I rejected this Metropolis offer because it was 100 percent Mormon community. I had no objections to Mormons at all, but I didn't want to go into any 100 percent community, and I told them I didn't

want to go into a 100 percent community. I happened to be a Mason, and I didn't care if it was 100 percent Masonic, 100 percent Catholic, or 100 percent Mormon or 100 percent anything. I didn't want to be in a 100 percent community. I think it is deadening to be in a community of that type. So I rejected it.

Then the Wells position opened up. Wells is about eight miles from Metropolis. I was interviewed by Horace Agee, the Board member. They had a peculiar setup there. They had a county school board and they had one representative from Wells on the school board, so you worked under one person. If he was a good person, you were lucky. If he was a poor person, you had a very difficult career as a principal. When I interviewed Agee, I found that he was a go-getter and quite an interesting citizen. After we had pretty well agreed on it, he said, "Well, you can have the job there, but I want you to have this understanding. I'll turn the school over to you, and you run it. If you don't run it, I'll fire you and get somebody that will run it." So, that was the agreement we had.

Well, I went out to Wells, and rented a house—I was getting married that spring. Then Mrs. Wooster and I moved out to Wells. I rented a house there that had three different levels in it. I used to bump my head on the various levels, and I told Adele that I should get a football helmet and put it out on the porch, so that when I went into the house I could put it on to keep from bumping my head. But those were the conditions that we lived under.

There was one tree in the community. It wasn't the most inspiring place, but we accepted the philosophy of life which is look for the good things and if you look on them, you can find them. And we found a very nice student body. We found conditions a little difficult. It was extremely cold out there with long winters, but we led a very happy four years there in Wells.

The big job I had in Wells was to stabilize the school. The former principal had tried to run a lumber yard and be principal of the school. I figured that running the school was about enough for any one individual to do, if he wanted to do it well. My predecessor had let the school run down. The students would climb out the windows. They were absent all the time and there was just no discipline. It just wasn't a school. So my job was to settle the thing down.

I went to the school to go over the equipment and everything in the summertime. The janitor gave me the good news that nobody would ever be able to handle that school, that the students were such that you couldn't possibly settle them down! So I got to thinking about how I would handle the situation.

After we had registration, I called a student body meeting and told them that we wanted to have a good school, that we could have a certain amount of fun during the process of learning, but we wanted a good school and a school that they would be proud of. I assumed that they wanted that type of thing; that we would work under certain regulations. I said that I was sure that we could cooperate and get along fine. I dismissed them and made no threats or anything else. I did have any trouble at all; we just went into the process of offering an education.

The only time I had trouble was when I had been there two or two and a half months. Mr. Agee's son played hooky one day, and when he came back to school, I just sent him back home. Here came Mrs. Agee barging up to the school, wanting to know what was going on! I told her what had happened. I was in the position where I had to make the decisions, and I had made the decision that the parents had to come to the school to get the boy back into the school, and make an

agreement that he would be there and do the proper things. Well, about that time, Mr. Agee came up to the school. As I say, he was a very aggressive man. He hired me on the basis that I'd run the school or be fired, so that was rather a timorous moment for me. He came up and said, "What goes here, Earl?" So I told him just what the situation was. He said, "By God, you did the right thing. My son is no better than anyone else's son." And he called his boy in, and he said, "You'll do what Mr. Wooster says, or else."

From then on, there was no possibility of having trouble in the school. We brought up the tone of the school and made some faculty changes, got some better faculty members the next year, and we were able to offer home economics and vocational education. We only had sixty students there and about six teachers. We offered some shop work and home economics and the basic courses. To give a wider breadth in languages, we used to give the languages in alternate years. We'd give two years of each language. When we gave Spanish, we'd start it out one year, and then when we were in the second year of Spanish, we'd give the first year of French. And that gave a wider offering to students. We'd offer chemistry one year, physics the next year, and so on.

The wife of the principal of the grade school had not graduated from high school, and she felt it very keenly. She was a nurse and a very fine woman. I told her to come on over, and I gave her two or three courses. I let her do her sewing and cooking and she'd have to bring some of the clothes she made so I could test that. That way, we gave her credits in home economics. There were several other areas where she did similar things. In English, I had her outline some of the work and write some themes so we could give her credit in English. I took it up with the State

Superintendent—Walter Anderson, at that time—and asked him if it would be acceptable to him if I did it. I told him that here was a woman who needed the education. I told him, "I think it's the job of the school to try to help people get education rather than trying to hinder them." Would he agree if I did this? He said yes, that he would agree to it; that he had confidence in me and felt that I would know the work she did. So we graduated her from high school. It was a little different from the usual procedures, but I felt, and I still feel, that the job of school people is to try to help people and not to hinder them. That was a little unique. She was forever grateful, and was nice enough not to try to offer me any financial rewards or anything for it, which I appreciated, because I didn't do it on that basis; and she knew that we hadn't.

When I was in Wells, Wells and Metropolis had always had very difficult relations between the communities and between the schools. In these smaller communities, the school is very frequently the key to the attitude of the community. So I got together with the principal of the Metropolis school and we discussed what we could do. We set up a procedure where the teams played basketball and the different sports that we had. They were very limited. When they played games, we'd have a snack after the game and we'd have the teams sit down with each other. Then we would try to set up the fact that it was athletic competition, that it was no disgrace to lose, and not a singularly great honor to win. After about two years of this, we got a very fine attitude; one of the finest attitudes I have ever seen in athletic teams. Those youngsters would go in and battle to win. And if they lost, they'd say, "Well, we'll beat you the next time." They'd laugh and kid each other about it, and talk about some of the things that happened in the game. And that attitude kind of permeated

the community, so that we had a very nice relationship, a very happy relationship.

I recall one time that Elko was the bitter rival and came out to play. And here were Metropolis youngsters rooting for Wells, and the Wells youngsters rooting for Metropolis. Elko was quite upset about it; it was rather unique that these rival communities would be rooting for each other. So it was interesting experience in Wells.

I mentioned earlier that the town had just one tree and that bothered me. So I went up to the McCuiston ranch about fifty miles east of Wells and got some black willow trees, and planted them around the school. I guess I got about fifty trees and planted them. Some of them prospered, but about fifty percent of them looked like a cat just crawling out of a lake, after they had been there about a year. Some of them did fairly well.

This McCuiston ranch was quite an interesting ranch. McCuiston had taken up a section of land way out in the desert down south of Montello, and he had developed that land so that it was the only green spot in the desert for miles. He had a fairly large family, about six youngsters, and they developed a little orchestra in the family. If you'd go out to visit them, they'd invite you to dinner and they'd get the orchestra out. They'd play and dance, and they really enjoyed life. It was a very inspirational thing to go out to the McCuiston ranch and see that family. (One of the boys, Bert, is in Reno now. He's working on the government agencies in Carson. He's a member of the Kiwanas Club. I see him quite frequently.)

You had a good type of attitude in that country. If you'd go out in valleys, people wanted you to come in, they wanted you to stay for dinner. The attitude was one of friendliness and it permeated the whole area, partly because of the fact that it was remote.

They didn't see people like they do now. Now they prefer not to see them, rather than to see them. Then, they welcomed visitors in, and people didn't take advantage of things. They were courteous and didn't take advantage and try to stay overnight. There was a wholesome, happy attitude. I think we lose something now when we don't have that attitude. It was a very healthy thing.

In Wells there were a couple of other interesting things that happened. In Elko, they had a county dormitory at that time to house the students from the ranches around the country. H. A. Agee felt that Wells should have everything that Elko had. So he said, "We ought to build a dormitory here." He went to bat on that thing, and we finally built a dormitory. It was never occupied by more than four or five students. It was really a waste of the taxpayers' money. I was never enthusiastic about it, but he was a very dominant man and wanted to build it, so we built it.

I might just say a word about H. A. Agee, too. The day I went there to look into the school situation in early June, I went to see Mr. Agee and to see the school and visit the community. I also wanted to arrange for a house for my new bride and me to live in when we came back from the honeymoon. That day, there was a man going through on the train who had crossed Mr. Agee—tried to cheat him out of some money or something. Agee got into the train, pulled the man out, hit him a couple of times, tossed him back into the train, and told him never to cross his path again.

After I was there, there was a man who went to work for Agee in the summer, and he wasn't doing any work, he was just loafing around. Agee went over and grabbed him and hit him a couple of times and said, "You get in there and work." So he made the man work all

day, and at the end of the day he said, "I'll fire you this afternoon and take you into town." So he did that. He beat the man up and made him work a little, and then took him into town and fired him. So, that was the type of direct actionist H. A. Agee was!

He was, also capable of being a very, very fine man. I recall one instance. Miss Bertha Knemeyer a very Outstanding educator, was principal of the high school in Elko at that time. She did something at a board meeting that upset Mr. Agee. He came home, and said, "Earl, do you want that job as principal of the high school in Elko?" It was one of the top positions in the state. I said, "Yes, I think that probably every school person in the state would like to have that job. But there is one thing I want to ask you, Mr. Agee. What makes you say that?" Well, he told me she had done something. He said, "I'm going to have her fired and if you want the job, you can have it." I said, "Well, you wouldn't respect me if I took the job under those conditions. You're angry now and if I took the job now under those conditions, you would not respect me. I couldn't respect myself, because Miss Knemeyer is a very fine educator, and because she did one thing to cross you up, she shouldn't be fired for it. I'll tell you what you do. You go home and think it over Mr. Agee and I'll think it over and I'll see you in the morning and we'll talk it over." In the morning I saw Mr. Agee. He came up to me with a kind of a silly smile on his face and said, "You darn fool, you're right." And that was the end of that. But he was that type of man. I was very fond of Horace Agee for he was a very, very fine citizen.

There was another extremely fine citizen there at Wells, Dr. Olmstead. He was an outstanding man, a very kindly man. He had a very fine family of three daughters and a son. He was an outstanding citizen in that

community for years and years and years. He worked very closely with Horace Agee. There was another very fine man there, Mr. Quilici, who ran a grocery store there in town. He was an outstanding citizen for a state and for the community; a very stable, fine citizen.

In terms of education, I don't think that in Dayton or Wells that I did anything remarkable. When I left Wells I went to Winnemucca. In Winnemucca they had a student strike. I went to Fallon very shortly after George McCracken was brought in there to settle the Fallon situation; I went to Wells after they had had difficulty in the school and the school was run down. Then, I went to Winnemucca after they'd had a student strike there. So it was interesting. I took over some hard jobs, and people said, "Well, you're taking over some very difficult jobs." I didn't view it that way. I thought it was easier to make a reputation under those conditions than it was going into a situation that was running splendidly.

When I went to Winnemucca, the background was rather interesting. When Walter Anderson ran for the State Superintendency, he came out to Wells and asked me if I would support him. I told him no, that I thought that W. J. Hunting was doing a good job in an office that he should be kept in that office. So, I wouldn't support Walter; I told him why, and that it was not a personal matter. He defeated Hunting for the State Superintendency.

Anderson was going through Winnemucca in the spring and found Out they were trying to get a principal for Humboldt County High School. lie called me long distance and told me that he had talked to them about me, and if I wanted it, to take it. So I called them and they told me to come on down. We left after school and drove to Winnemucca, which was quite a drive. We interviewed the board, drove

back got in just as the sun was coming up, had breakfast, and I went to work.

I was given a very nice welcome by the School Board in Winnemucca when I was elected principal. I had some understandings with the board in regard to the position. I think it is wise for anybody applying for any position not to be too anxious to accept a position and to set up certain standards, so that both parties know what he is getting into. Then the school board has an idea of what he will do.

When I went to Winnemucca, I tried to think of what was the first thing to do. They had not only had a student strike, they'd had difficulty between the grade school and high school. I thought the first logical thing to do was to go over to see the principal of the grade school, who happened to be Roger Corbett. He became a very, very dear friend of mine. Later, he came to Reno and was principal of the high school and assistant superintendent after I became superintendent. He was a very competent school man.

I went over to see Roger. When I met him in his office, he was sitting down. I told him who I was, and that I had come over to see him and talk with him a little. I said, "It seems to me there had been some difficulty between the two schools here. I'm not interested in hearing about it, and I don't think we should look into the past; I think we should look into the future. I think it might be a good idea if you and I know each other and agree on certain things. The way I feel about it, if we have any difficulties, instead of going out and talking to the public, it's up to me to come over and talk to you, or if you feel there are any difficulties for you to come over and talk to me. Then, if we cannot resolve our problems., we can take them up with our respective school boards. I think that when we go out in front of the public, we should go out as educators

and promote in the community a system of education for the—children, rather than to be carrying brawls out into the public." Roger sat there and looked at me for a minute, and he stood up and put his arm around me and said, "I've been trying to meet a man like you for a long time; I don't think we'll ever have any trouble." And we never did have any trouble. We got along well; we'd confer on problems between the schools.

We set up a system of tests for students in mathematics. If students were below average in mathematics, we'd put them in "general math." If they were good, I'd put them in algebra. I discovered that these poorer students after a year in general mathematics, would be ready for algebra. And they'd be about as good in algebra as the more alert students would. So we had a lot less failures in algebra than we had had before, and I think it was a service to the children to do that.

There again, the job in the school, the big job, was stabilizing the faculty, stabilizing the student body. The student body was deeply in debt, I think about \$1,000. They had borrowed money to carry out activities, and gone high, wide, and handsome on things. I told them they could carry on only those activities that they could pay for, and we had to pay the debts. Great groans went up, but they accepted it. I told them we'd work with them and try to help them on things; but it was up to them to assume their responsibilities, to become good citizens, and to pay their bills. Of course, that didn't make any enemies downtown when the word went out! The students shouldered the burden, and within a year we paid off all the debts so we were on a current basis. There was considerable enthusiasm.

We had had a very poor music program in the school. I changed music teachers, and brought in a girl named Isabel Loring, who was extremely good in student activities. She

came in there and put in a very fine program of music. She had all the girls and half the boys of the school in her program. She developed a play that she put on in the spring. Even traveling men who came through would stay over to see it. She did an extremely fine job on it. It also developed student morale.

I think the most significant comment that I heard was by a dentist who lived on the street where all the students going to school had to pass his home. He said that before this regime was set up in the school, as the students would go by there, they'd swear and cuss and talk boisterously. He said, "What's happened up there? When the Students go by now they are all busy talking; they talk in low tones; they seem to be talking about things at the school they are interested in. Their attitude is completely changed." So I told him that what we were trying to do was give them things that would interest them along with their work, and that had probably made the change. Well, it had, and it had made a tremendous change in the community. I thought that was quite a comment on what had happened there—that the attitude of the students had completely changed from trying to be boisterous, to trying to be fairly decent citizens.

I learned while in Winnemucca a very fine thing in student discipline. I had a boy in school who seemed to have the habit of getting in trouble all the time. Different teachers would send him to the office for corrective measures, and he was in my office almost all the time. One morning a teacher sent word to me when I got to the office before school started that the boy had done a very nice thing, So I sent out word to send him into the office. He came into the office, and in a very gruff voice, I told him to sit over in the corner. I took care of the tardiness and absences and things. When I finished with them, I turned to him and in a gruff voice

told him to come over and sit down by me, and I asked him, "Do you know what you're in here for?" He said, "Oh, I don't know, I guess I've done something." I said, "Yes, you have." So, I told him this very nice thing he had done and I said, "I just wanted you to know that we also notice the nice things that people do here. We think that it was a very good thing you did, and we want you to know that we appreciate it very much." And I sent him to class. Well, within a week I was getting returns from all over from teachers of the nice things he had done. I never had the boy back in the office again. I'd see him in the hallway (I'd try not to overdo it) and I'd wink at him and say, "Good going, Bill." That's all that ever happened. His mother told me about a month or two later, "You know, he had the idea that all you did was sit in the office and try to catch him doing something. It was a tremendous shock when you called him in and told him he'd done something nice, and he got the idea that you were trying to help him." Now he was enthused; he was doing good things and his grades went up.

Well, those little affairs helped the morale of the school. I learned something about the handling of student problems, he learned something and I think the whole staff learned something. We had a very fine morale there and were very proud of it.

Some of the more interesting people in Winnemucca, while I was there, were Mr. R. C. Stitser, editor of the local newspaper and Mr. Ed Reinhart, who ran the local department store. The Reinharts had been in Winnemucca almost from the inception of the community. They were a bulwark in the community. Ed Reinhart handled not only the department store, but was president of one of the two banks in Winnemucca. It is interesting to notice that at depression time, Mr. Reinhart's bank closed early and

then, in 1932, the First National Bank in Winnemucca closed leaving the community with no banking facilities.

We generally paid the teachers just prior to the first of the month, but for some reason, I didn't take the vouchers to the County Auditor to make it possible to pay the teachers. Instead of issuing the warrants on Saturday to the teachers, I planned to issue them on Monday; but the bank did not open on Monday. So the teachers received their monthly pay, and from then on, I had to take the vouchers to the County Treasurer and collect the cash and then go up and pay the teachers in cash. One time the County Treasurer, who was a very fine elderly woman, gave me a thousand dollars extra, and neither one of us noticed it until I got up to the school to pay the teachers. I found that I had a thousand dollars extra in hard cash, so I took this back and gave it to her, and she was forever grateful that I had had a thousand dollars extra and had brought the money back to her.

The people at that time, having no bank in the community, went to the post office and put their money in postal savings. They would line up there on Saturdays half a block long, trying to deposit in the post office. The post office actually became the bank of the community during a great part of the depression. The Reinharts were pretty well eliminated from the business picture during the depression.

R. C. Stitser was a great "needler"; he liked to needle everybody. He used to needle the schools editorially and otherwise—orally and so on. I can think of one instance where he tried to needle me in regard to our language program at the high school. He said we were wasting the taxpayers' money, and that we were offering too many languages. I let him exhaust himself in speech and when he had finished, I asked him a simple question. How were we adding to the tax burden when we

offered just one language? We had alternated our programs in science, and in every area where we could, to make it possible for the student to get as wide a range of educational activities as possible, at the minimum cost to the taxpayer. After we had completed this, he gulped a couple of times and said, "Well, every time I attack you and Roger Corbett you lick me on something."

He was also a great needler of teachers. In one particular instance, a new teacher came into town and I took her down to the hotel so she could get a room. We were in the lobby of the hotel and the bar was very close by. Stitser bellowed out clear across the lobby for her to come over and have a drink with him. She almost handed in her resignation at that time! I kind of studied the situation, and after that every time a new teacher came to town (and we would have new teachers each year) I would brief them ahead of time as to what he would do. Then they would just smile and talk to him, and were not ruffled by his comments. So one day I was talking to him and he said, "You know, Earl, you get the best teachers we've ever had in this community."

He had a lot of good qualities; Stitser did a lot for the community. And although he liked to needle some of us, he needled other people as well. He was really a good element in the community; he would get out and support you, but he was the type of man who liked to argue. He liked to discuss public questions, and he liked to make the typical approach of taking a broad charge at everything and then finding out what the facts were later. It made life interesting at least!

Some other prominent citizens were the Brown family, of which Judge Merwyn Brown was the son. Merwyn attended Stanford Law School. Then he went in there as district attorney after he graduated, and then into the judgeship for that local district. He's been

judge there for almost thirty years, and I think he has done a pretty competent job as judge. I've never seen him in action; my son has.

Judge Hawkins was there just before that time. He was quite a prominent man. He was quite a stable member of the community too, and contributed considerably to the community. He left there and went to Las Vegas to practice law. I had all of his children in school. I recall one time discussing the costs of schools with Judge Hawkins. He said that the school building cost too much, and I compared the cost of the school building to the courthouse, and then the number of people that the school took care of to the number of people that the courthouse took care of. And after we had concluded the discussion, there were no more comments on the costs of the schools!

One of the other prominent citizens in the community was Emil Snider, the manager of the telephone company there, president of the school board and quite a community leader.

Emil Snider was a very conservative man; it was very interesting how you had to work with him. To me it was, at least. I'd go down to the telephone company on Saturday mornings and sit down and talk with Emil about the problems in the community, state, nation, and the world in general. During these discussions, I would bring in a little discussion of things we needed for the schools. I would do that for several different times, and pretty soon it became his idea. Then it popped up in the board meeting, and we were able to get action on it without any trouble. It is merely one of the techniques of being a school administrator; you study your school board, and your personnel, and then you try to work with them in the ways that are best to develop a good school system.

There are many different methods in working with different people. With your

teachers, you try to call them together. When I was in Winnemucca, I developed a policy of hiring inexperienced teachers, but the top people that graduated from the University of Nevada. Most of the school people in the state want to get experienced people. I felt, though, that if we got the top inexperienced people, they would work into the system, and do a better job over a period of five years, than if we got experienced people because they would come in with their own ideas—and want to do things their way—rather than the way the group were doing it. We had very, very fine results from that. I would immediately establish with the new teachers that I would not walk into their classes to supervise until they had gotten established. I would talk to them before school and after school. They came to me with their problems. It worked out quite effectively.

When I left Winnemucca, I tried to accomplish something there that perhaps I shouldn't have tried to accomplish. A small group promoting Al Lowry for principal of the high school. I had very high regard for Al Lowry, but I did not have a high regard for the group that was promoting him for the position. I tried to get the school board to join with the grade school board, put Roger Corbett as superintendent and then put Mr. Lowry in as principal of the high school. This would have taken the heat off of Mr. Lowry from the group. I was unable to do that because Lowry's mother-in-law, Mrs. Abel, was on the school board, and she got the wrong conception. She thought that I was trying to belittle Mr. Lowry rather than to help him, and became very adamant about it. That killed the whole proposition. Al himself understood what I was trying to do and appreciated it, and worked with me on it. But he was unable to convince his mother-in-law that my intentions were good, so the thing fell through.

There was an interesting commentary on that later on. There was a chap who went on as principal of the Elko County High School, promoted by a disgruntled group in the community. I was up there one time, and they offered me the principalship. I made no comment to them, but I went up and saw the principal, Miss Bertha Knemeyer, and told her about it. She was happy to have the information as to who was there and everything. She asked me why I wasn't going to take the position since she was going to be fired. I told her that I would take the position if they would get a petition out, and have all of her friends sign it and ask me to take it. Otherwise I wouldn't take it.

Well, the man who took it told me what happened two years later. I was talking to him and I told him about the incident in Winnemucca where the five men were trying to get Mr. Lowry as principal of the high school. I made the comment to him that had they been able to do this, Mr. Lowry would never have been principal because they would have tried to run the school. He looked at me, and kind of smiled and said, "Are you telling me? The same thing happened to me here; a committee put me in," and, he said, "I have never been principal of the school. And I'm going to have to resign because I can't do anything." That type of thing happens quite frequently, and the people who are drawn in very frequently don't realize what's going to happen to them. That invariably happens when people promote a person for a certain job; they're going to have a say in running of the job, so you have to be very careful about it.

In 1935, B. D. Billinghamurst, the Superintendent of the Reno School District Number Ten, passed on, and E. Otis Vaughn, the principal of the high school, was one of the applicants for the superintendency. Most of

the school people in the state were applying for the superintendency, but I had the feeling that Mr. Vaughn should legitimately be promoted to the superintendency. So I thought I'd apply for the high school principalship. I took it up with my school board and told them I wanted to apply. They told me to write my own ticket as to salary. I told them I wasn't particularly interested in salary; that I was hunting for greater educational opportunities. They gave me permission to apply in Reno, and I put in my application. Vaughn was elected superintendent and I was elected principal of the high school.

I recall very vividly when I was made principal of the high school that prior to my application for the position, most of the men in the state were trying for the superintendency. I went to Superintendent Vaughn and talked to him before I applied for the position, and asked him if he felt we could work together. He said he'd be very happy to let me apply and that he thought we could work together. So I went back to my board in Winnemucca and asked them if it was all right for me to apply and they agreed to it. So when I was elected, I went to Superintendent Vaughn and told him that I had for a long time advocated cooperation among educators and now was my chance to show, since I had been top dog for a while out in the state, that I could be under him and cooperate with him. We got along very, very well.

There were changes that I wanted to make. I have always had the philosophy that if you go new into an area, the thing to do is to just keep the old cart rolling along for a year or two, and then come in slowly with recommendations for changes. There are always possibilities for changes (and I say this with all due respect to my predecessor, Superintendent Vaughn). And he agreed to several of the changes I suggested.

I worked with the staff in trying to effect some of these changes. I felt it was quite important that the staff participate. Incidentally, I might add that that has become quite an issue now throughout the whole United States of staff participation in setting of educational policies. I felt it was just common sense for an administrator to ask the people that were working—people say under you; I prefer to say with you—to participate in setting up programs, because they come up with ideas that one person in an office can't think of. It broadens the scope; you get cooperation; it has a great number of advantages. So through the staff we took up changes in registration, programs changes, and discussed them. We set up department heads in the school at that time and then the department heads would meet and discuss changes. We also set up the first counseling in a high school at that time. It was a very, very limited basis, but at least it was a start.

When I became principal at Reno High School, one of the first problems was the fact that we didn't have any adequate control of the attendance of students. They had a system of each teacher reporting absences, and there were great voids in it, so we changed that. We put in an attendance officer, who later became vice-principal. Then we tried to check out attendances. They had had voids in registration, where the student would take out a card and then be absent for three weeks and then finally come into school and register. We tried to plug that gap by having an immediate count on every card that went out; a recheck on the students who were enrolled at the end of the semester to find out where they were. It worked quite satisfactorily. So we eliminated these loiterers who each semester would take two or three weeks off and register late.

This was all done through faculty cooperation and faculty suggestions. We set

our system of excuses up with this attendance officer. Actually it paid off by the increased attendance; the state support actually paid for the cost to handle all this. We felt that we had a better setup because when students know that they can take advantage of things, it cuts down morale of the school. And the funny thing is, that students will gripe and whine and argue about things, but, in the long run, they like to be under reasonably rigid discipline. They really enjoy it; they'll gripe about it; they're like soldiers. They'll gripe about things, but actually they respect people who force them to do it; they want decisions to be made.

Those changes gave a better tone to the school and, we thought, worked out quite effectively. That was actually in building up the tone of the school and the spirit of the faculty—one of the most important things we did.

We had a system of merits and demerits which never did function correctly. I liked to call it the "citizenship program." And I say that you deduct points for bad citizenship and get away from the merits and demerits; because you never give any merits, you only give demerits.

You have to have some type of bookkeeping system to be able to keep a record of student practices, either good or bad—and maybe only the bad ones. It may be a negative approach, but you do have those people to deal with and as a principal—we didn't have a counselor then—I had to deal with that five percent that are always in trouble. It was with great relief that I would stand out in the hallway and see some of the good students go by, and know them. It is extremely important that these things be taken care of.

To show the importance of counseling, standing out in the hallway of the high school one day saw a youngster walking down the hallway, and I walked around so I could

confront him and ask him what he was doing out there. He said he felt he'd quit school. I said, "Well, that's a strange thing. I'd be interested in knowing the reasons why; won't you come into the office and sit down? Maybe we'll have a little chat. This is just a friendly chat; you're not being put on the carpet for anything. I'm just interested." So he came in and said that he wanted to take carpentry; he wanted to be a carpenter and that he wasn't able to get in the class, and there wasn't any use his going to school if he couldn't get into that class. So I said, "I think something must have happened that you were not able to get into the class; why don't you do down and see Mr. Gray?" (That's Guild Gray's father; he taught shop at that time). "Go down and see Mr. Gray, and have a talk with him after school, and see if you can't get in the class. Instead of dropping school, let's make an additional effort and see if we can't work this thing out. Your education is important to you." He was a pretty good boy basically, so he said, "I'm willing to do that." So I said, "All right; if you want to take the rest of the day off till after school, feel free to do it, and I'll excuse you for that time. I don't want to put you under undue pressure. Just work this thing out if we can." So he said, "No, I'll go to school the rest of the day."

As soon as he left the office, I went down to see Mr. Gray and told him about it. He said, "Well, that boy's a son of a friend that I worked with for years. I'd love to have him in the class; he'd be a very good student." So I told Mr. Gray not to tell him that I'd seen him. The boy went down, and he came bounding up to me after school, all a-flutter and excited, and said he was able to get into the class. So we arranged his program. We may not have saved a soul, but at least we kept a boy in school, and he graduated from high school.

Now in an instance like that, when you have counselors, you have more people able to do more of that type of thing. It's very important.

I think of another instance of a mother who came up to see me. She had a son who was always out at the airport. He wanted to fly airplanes; that's all he wanted to do, all he was interested in. She wanted him to complete high school: so she came up to see me to ask how he could do it. I said, "Well, here's what we'll do; we'll gear him to some programs most closely associated with aviation and we'll give him just two courses. We'll have him go to school in the afternoon or in the morning, one or the other, and he can stay out at the airport the rest of the time. So if you'll bring the boy in, we'll talk about it." So we talked about it, and he was willing. We put him in geometry, so he could take physics, with the idea that geometry would help him. He also had to have algebra. I discussed with him that he wanted to graduate from high school, because if he didn't always want to be a pilot, he had to have education enough so he could do more than being just a chauffeur. So he went for it, and we got him in that semester. Pretty soon he was in school full-time. Then the war broke out; and he was very patriotic and in his last semester of high school, he went into the service. So here we were giving him examinations while he was out in the Pacific, in the service, to graduate him from high school. We graduated him. To me it's very interesting; for twenty years I received postcards every Christmas from that boy.

Those are the things that counselors can do to help children. I think a good counselor program is extremely important. These are just isolated instances of it, but they do show the need for people who contact them. We have to recognize that some of these youngsters come from families—this boy

happened to come from a very fine family and very fine people—who are not interested, who never go to see what their children are doing. The children need somebody as a friend, somebody they can go to.

I used to always tell teachers that the best thing they could do in teaching was to meet their class in the morning with a smile, to try to have a happy attitude, and to look for the good in students (if they did, they wouldn't find very many poor ones), to take a positive attitude on all these things, and then they'd be able to help the students. The students, in turn, knowing they had a friend, would do better work. I think that is basically true. I might add that one of the things that bothers me now is the scramble for credits, rather than the human things involved in teaching. The human things are extremely important. I'm a little bothered about that; that we think if we educate people, they'll be good teachers. And that is one element. But the most important element, I think is the humanity and compassion toward students—the willingness to work, and to do a job with children. If you have that, you can have a limited knowledge and do a much better job than a person with a lot of knowledge and no compassion.

Those are a few of the things that went on in Reno High School. We were greatly crowded; we had to utilize all the space we could; we constantly went over those problems; we had no playground area; we had limited activity for students; ROTC had to drill in the streets and dodge traffic while they were drilling. Other conditions were not the best—Herb Foster with his athletic teams had to walk about six blocks for their practice. But it's amazing what can be done if you have problems like that. If we take the positive attitude to try to solve them, it's amazing what can be done and how much can

be accomplished. I think we did have a good high school, and I think the students did get a good education from the high school. I was very happy about it.

And one other thing that I battled out at that time was the fact that the University of Nevada used to allow students to enter who had not graduated from high school, and they were able then, through that process, to get double credits for courses they'd taken at the University. We finally got that resolved so that a student had to graduate before he could go to the University. That was a long and bitter battle, but it was finally worked out. It's been in effect ever since, and now they have to be full graduates. They can go there in summer school to take courses, I believe, being undergraduates, but they're not given credits. They may be given undergraduate status in college for these courses, but the program is different than it was at that time. I think it probably is a very good program now.

Then when Superintendent Vaughn retired in 1944, I was asked by the board to submit my application for the superintendency, and I was elected. Right at that time I really got into the hot water of school administration, because since that time we've had expanding population and we've had problems that were never thought of prior to World War II. The problems mounted in geometric proportion and I got in just in time to get right square in the middle of this thing. I recall now that for the first ten years of my superintendency I didn't have time to have a vacation. It was work, work, work all the time trying to keep ahead of things, I sometimes wonder if I was able to keep ahead as I should!

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## MY LIFE WORK: SECOND PHASE

When I was elected superintendent, many educational innovations were coming in. We had the problem of expansion, both of the physical setup of the school district and of the educational offerings of the district. But after all is said and done, when you come right down to it, one of the great joys of life is solving problems. Anytime a person isn't willing to face up to a problem, it's my estimate there's something wrong with him. Problems are there, they want solutions, they cry for solutions, and I think if you're a worthwhile citizen you'll accept and try to work out the challenges. It was a lot of fun. It was a lot of work, but it was also a lot of fun trying to do it.

During this time I was superintendent, we made some innovations. The first project we undertook was when we realized that we had to expand the school district. Reno High School was overcrowded and so we discussed first the adding of an addition to the old high school. We got into the problem and realized that was impossible. There wasn't area enough for it, so we felt then that the thing to do was

build a new high school and convert that into a possible junior high school.

We also had the need for additional grade schools and so we started in and got a bond issue, too, of a million and a half, which looked like a tremendous amount of money at that time. We were going to build a million-dollar school and a grade school for five hundred thousand dollars. Before we could get the architectural work done, the cost increases had gone up so much that we had to go out for an additional two and a half million-dollar bond issue. We built the Reno High School from that money. By the time we got through, we were short of money. They're doing the thing right now that we should have done then—building a shop addition to the high school. We wanted that; we had it planned to go out by the heating plant on the high school, but we had to eliminate it for lack of money and put the shop in the basement, which has never been satisfactory.

But we did go ahead and build a high school and we built the Veteran's Memorial

School, which was the grade school we had in mind.

From that first issue, we were able to get the initial start. Reno High School was built to accommodate 1,500 students, and the community was greatly shocked; they thought we were over-building. We had very, very bitter criticism at that time, but we went ahead with the building and had it built.

We must remember that the psychology of the public was a pre-war psychology at that time. When we wanted to find a site for Reno High School, we encountered great problems. We looked over about seven or eight sites and finally determined that the site out on Booth Street would be the best site. We encountered so much difficulty that we asked the Chamber of Commerce to appoint a citizen's committee to work on this. We had decided to buy forty acres out on Booth Street. This citizen's committee, after processing about seven, eight, or nine different sites, came to the same conclusion. The only difference was that, instead of buying forty acres, they recommended that we buy fifty-five acres. The board proceeded to buy the acreage. We condemned part of the property. It was a friendly condemnation suit and, I think, the first condemnation suit for school property in the city of Reno.

Then we got into the planning of the building and, of course, there was great pulling and hauling in regard to that. There's always difficulty because many capable people want to be the architects. They finally selected the firm of Ferris & Erskine as architects for the building.

It took two years to plan the building and, there again, we did something at that time that I think possibly was a little unique. We allowed the faculty to participate in the planning of the building. We had the floor plan drawn. Then we took it up with the different departments,

and had the department heads take it up with their people to make suggestions in regard to the planning.

We must remember this in any school building; no building has ever been built that is considered perfect after it is built. It's considered perfect before you build it, you always find out that some things could be done differently. Basically, I think the high school was very acceptable and was a good job, but we did find things that could have been changed. The thinking now is quite different than it was then; we had quite a bit of pre-war thinking.

For instance, in checking with other buildings, we found only one building built before the war in California that could be used as anything like a model or an example to work from. That was the McClatchy High School in Sacramento. We went over that and found all the good things and the bad things about it. I recall the principal down there stating at the time, "Well, you came down to find all the faults of the building. It might be wise for you also to look for the good things." Fortunately, we went down with the idea of looking both for the good things and the areas where they thought they'd made some mistakes.

I think probably one of the unique things we did in Reno High School was set up offices for the staff members, the teachers. Then they could hold consultations with the student, and they had an area to retreat to. It also made possible greater utilization of the building; the staff member never before had any place to go to when he wasn't teaching. If he wanted to, he could use that office; it made greater utilization of the classrooms.

We finally got under way in the building. It took two years before they put it up for bid. Two of the local contracting firms lost the bid, I think, by \$2,000 and by \$10,000 in a \$2,700,000 project. One tried to have their

attorney set it up so they could get the bid, but it was so written that it was impossible to give them the bid. We would have preferred a local contractor, because you can always come back on them if anything goes wrong with the building afterward. If it's an outside contractor, it's extremely difficult to do that. There was no way it could be done; it wasn't a matter of favoritism; it was a matter of practicability. So the Nomellini Construction Company got the job.

You always have difficulty with contractors doing construction, and we had our difficulties with them. But the building went on and I think, basically, we have a very fine structure there. I think it was probably the first building in the city of Reno that was built with earthquake resistant construction. People criticize the big pillars in front of it, but it must be understood that they are part of the earthquake resistant construction. They anchor the main part of the building; the building is really four buildings tied together. We finally got through that with additional criticism; then we had to start out on additional building programs.

One criticism was that the site was too far out of town. We took a ruler and laid it on the Mary S. Doten School and the Mt. Rose School and took a line right across from that and that line ran right down Booth Street. The people thought it was out of town; actually, it was about Six blocks from the center of town. That again brings up the psychology.

Then they said it was a swamp. Water did collect there, but the reason it collected there was that they built a road about a foot and a half above the area and, of course, the water collected there. They called it "frog hollow." I used to get letters from Senator McCarran, kidding me about "frog hollow."

Well, we went ahead with it. I recall very vividly during the big flood in 1951 or 1952,

that a very prominent woman in Reno was down in front of the Mapes Hotel, knee deep in water, screaming about Reno High School being flooded. But the fact remains that there wasn't a drop of water on Reno High School other than what fell by rain, when the center of the community was under a foot and a half of water. So our judgment in selecting the site in terms of flood was not too bad.

Other criticisms were that there would be traffic congestion there. You can't eliminate a school because of the possibilities of traffic congestion; it was our contention—and the contention has been borne out—as the community developed, that area would develop. The problems would develop and have to be solved, whether the school was there or not. The school would expedite the solution of those problems.

Under the F. R. Smith administration about 1952, the city council proposed to build a bridge across there. They had planned the bridge at too low an elevation. When the flood came, they realized they had to raise it. They abandoned the project at that time, and they are just now getting back to the building of a bridge across there. That is unfortunate, because the Federal Building was built there and the traffic pattern would have been better if they had built the bridge at the earlier time.

So we have the problem of the location of the building, the so-called drainage of the building, tied in with the location of the traffic problems. Another criticism arose because the building was too big, and we brick-faced it. We contended that the cost of keeping up the exterior would be greater by painting than it would be by brick facing. I think a period of time has proved that.

Also, we put tile on the inside of the building and we were criticized for that. We figured it out, and figured that the additional cost would be exceeded in ten years by the

upkeep, if we didn't have it on the interior. I think that has proven out. It was cheaper, because it's very easy; it looks as new now as when we built it on the interior hallway.

In building a building, you have to realize you'll be criticized. You try to put things in the building that will eliminate maintenance costs in the future. It costs more to do that when you build the building, but over a thirty-or forty-year period, it is cheaper. You have to evaluate that, and we were thinking in terms of the cost of maintenance at that time. If you figured the increased cost of maintenance now, the savings would be terrific. We were thinking in terms of the cost at that time, and within a ten-year period we'd paid for all the extras we put in to eliminate maintenance. If we paid for them now, boy! We really have saved money on it!

So those were some of the criticisms of the building. We had limited criticism about our elementary schools.

I might add that we depended on the Planning Commission for the location of school sites, and worked very closely with them. We kept in touch with all the subdivisions that were going in, all the developments within the community. I think it's proven out that this was a profitable method for locating school sites, because they had the information for us.

When you get into choosing school sites, you pick up a piece of property that's out in the country and make a school site out of it. Then people complain, because there's no sidewalks and no streets to it. Then the sidewalks and streets go in, and you live in luxury for four or five years without criticism, because it's a good school site. Then they have to put in arterial streets, and you put in an arterial in front of the building. Then there's a complaint because there's an arterial there. Eventually, you have to face up to the fact

that the children are going to have to learn at a fairly young age how to handle themselves in traffic, because they're going to have to do it sooner or later. My contention is, if there is traffic there, it's going to be school traffic near a school building, and there's no more danger to children than if you put them in an uncontrolled traffic area.

I think of the old Anderson School, when they were four-laneing highway 395. The parents out there complained bitterly about it. I was a proponent of four-laneing the street. I went out there to a PTA meeting. They were quite riled up about it. I brought out the point that if they had a four-lane highway, a child had to watch the traffic coming from only one way. Then he had the landing area in the middle of the highway and he'd be much safer than if he was trying to cross two-way traffic. That idea, with some reluctance, was finally accepted.

When we moved into the new Reno High School, we reorganized the educational setup. I was sometimes a little amused at educators talking about the junior high school setup and the senior high setup and all these systems. Actually, what happened was after World War I. Educators were faced with building shortages, so they developed the junior high school idea to get better use of buildings, if you want to come right down to the basic facts of it. It had other advantages, but that was really the basic reason they did it.

In Reno School District Number Ten at this time, when the high school was completed, we went from a junior high school-senior high school setup (which is known as a six-three-three) to a four-four-four which gave us four years of high school. Then four grades (fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth) were put into what was the old junior high school. We then had kindergarten and the first four grades in what had been the

elementary schools. We went on with that for several years until we could increase the building program. When we built a new junior high school or two, we went back to the six-three-three program.

I anticipate that in the future there will be some breakdowns on that because of there being terrific amount of attention given to education now. It's in a state of ferment; the conception of education is changing very rapidly and the methods for educating the children are changing. I anticipate that probably the six-three-three program will break down, but whatever research shows, we'll be up against a practical situation of building use. That is going to have its part in determining what will be done.

We were aided during the expansion that came in the 1950's by some far-seeing citizens. The PTA's got in and helped us very definitely. I recall that there was a committee setup. Mary Ellen Glass was one of the prominent figures in it. There was also a woman here that was the statistical expert, Ramona First, and a number of other PTA people that worked on this and helped us promote these bond issues.

We went ahead with our building program during this time. There, again, you get down to the practical aspects of education; we had to build a number of grade schools. We had new residential areas developing all over town. So I developed what we called a "unit school" building. We'd build a unit of the building, and then as the area increased, and they had need for more rooms, we'd add on to it, and finally, come up with a full school building. These unit school buildings have served very well. It has meant that we've been able to utilize, within the district, practically all of the classrooms, rather than have empty classrooms for a while, then overcrowded, then empty classrooms again. It's been a practical approach to the problem, and I think

an approach that has been quite reasonable as far as the taxpayer is concerned. And those things all should be taken into consideration.

I had always talked in education that children were different, also. So in the conception of these unit buildings, we tried to adhere to the idea of a completely flexible classroom, so that you could adapt it to any teacher. I recall that one day a woman came out from the United States Office of Education, and she wanted to go through these buildings. She went through one of these unit buildings and she saw teachers using the informal setup for desks, reading circles, and every type of thing and she said, "Gee, this is a remarkable thing. Rooms are flexible enough so that you can adapt a classroom to the teacher, rather than trying to adapt the teacher to the classrooms." Teachers don't adapt very well.

Washoe County has been very fortunate in that it has been able to keep up with the building program, and that has not been true in all districts. Las Vegas got way behind; they have never caught up. They are just at this time starting to catch up with their building needs. When you don't have areas to educate children, education is not as good as it should be. And heaven knows, it's hard enough to keep education up to top quality under any conditions. It's difficult to get good teachers, but if you have good buildings, it's easier to get teachers, and easier to handle the educational problems.

So Washoe County has been quite fortunate in being able to keep up with this. I point with considerable pride to the fact that when I retired as Superintendent in 1959, we had two high school sites for future construction and four junior high school sites.

You might also look to the savings to the taxpayer. Out in the Wooster High School site—we acquired that for \$2,700 an acre—

the property just south of it when we built the school sold for \$17,000 an acre, and just north of it for one dollar per square foot, or \$43,500 per acre. We figure on that school site alone we saved the taxpayer over \$1,500,000. So purchasing the sites early is an advantage to the taxpayer. It is not generally recognized, and I don't want anybody to put a halo around my head for having done it, but it's just good business procedure to try to do that where it's possible.

During my time as superintendent, I tried to initiate the ungraded primary in the schools. We had it working to a quite a good degree of success in Reno School District Number Ten, but in the county setup there were certain oppositions to it. I was a little amazed at the time, because Mr. Hug was very violently opposed to the ungraded primary, and I was quite interested, when I'd have staff meetings to see the principals shifting over to his viewpoint on the thing. It was a little heartbreaking, but nevertheless a little amusing, too, to see this shift. Now the ungraded primary has pretty much faded out of the picture and, of course, having been an advocate of it, I watch with great interest what's going on. At the present time the philosophy of the ungraded primary is being adopted all over the country. I always liked to call it the "continuous progress program;" rather than the "ungraded primary;" the student individually progresses at his own rate of speed, which I think is extremely important.

To me this is a very interesting thing; when you try to initiate anything new, people immediately set about to try to look at the old system and see what was wrong with it, and then why you tried to take a different step. Then look at both the benefits and the disadvantages of that new step and try to correct the disadvantages and promote the

advantages. But a typical individual looks at it and tries to find all the faults in it.

I felt at the time that the ungraded primary would need constant refinements. Whatever you put in will need refinements all the time; it will need observation, Change is perpetual and a person who doesn't look at the need for change is derelict in his duty. Nothing is static in education or in anything else in the world, hardly. I think you have to take the attitude when you go in that there's going to be constant change; you have to be willing to accept it. You have to look into it, try to initiate it. That's part of the responsibilities of superintendent. Of course, I was very unhappy because the ungraded primary died a-borning, but I think it will come back and in another form. It's going to have to.

I'm tremendously interested at the present time that under this new federal legislation, under Section Four of the new law, the government is setting up regional research centers and regional laboratories, and is going to set up experimental schools throughout the country with the idea that research does not reach the level of action for a long, long time. In this program they would do research in laboratories and try to evaluate this research and spread it out in the districts, so that it will be picked up within a very short time and put into actual practice. I'm very interested in that; it goes along with my philosophy that we live under continual progress. We must watch these things progressing as we can.

I'm thoroughly convinced that there will be more and more attention given to the individual student; he'll be given an opportunity to progress as rapidly as he can. It's criminal to try and force the average student to keep up with the accelerated student, or the retarded student to keep up with the average student. They'll progress at their own rate. It's always been my philosophy

that many of these so-called slow learners, given time to learn, can learn very well. And that they should be given that opportunity. We have geared our educational program on teaching the average, which has hurt the accelerated student. And it's also hurt the retarded student, or slow student. It also hasn't contributed greatly to the average student. So I think that we have to change our philosophy some and get in and try to gear it more and more to the individual student, which will completely eliminate the grade setup now.

In discussing the ungraded program, I used to go to the people and they'd say, "Well, you can't group students." I always went back and said, "Well, we've been doing it for a hundred years or more and I see nothing wrong with it." And they said, "What do you mean?" Well, grading was originally grouping. Students were grouped according to their abilities, and when they had learned enough in grade one, they could go to grade two. But in some way or another we forgot that. I think it occurred along about 1912 to 1920, when throughout the whole United States they passed compulsory education laws; students had to go to school until they were sixteen, seventeen, eighteen years old. And educators failed to keep up with what was happening; they failed to realize that we had then a number of students that had dropped out of school before, and made the graded setup function. Now they're in school and have to stay there, and we failed to compensate for these changes. And we're just about thirty years or more late in it. The ungraded primary is a step toward doing that. I think we have realized the problems now, and I look for considerable progress along that line.

While I was superintendent, I had two or three interesting things happen. One of them was when they had the first Negro student

at the University who completed her work in education and was ready for her student teaching, or practice teaching, as they call it. That was along, I guess about 1953 or 1954.

Dean Traner, Roger Corbett, and I had a meeting, I said, "I think this is going to call for a little common horse-sense, and that's all." Dean Traner was a great fellow to go along on the horse-sense approach to everything; he was a very practical man, and to me, an outstanding educator.

So we sat down and talked about it and I said, "I think one of the important things is we place this girl in the proper school; one that will have the proper attitude toward her." So I said, "Suppose we do this: we will all write down the school that we think is the best school to put the girl in." So we all wrote this down on a piece of paper; then we collected the papers and looked at them. All of us had said the Orvis Ring School. Then we said, "Why did we put down the Orvis Ring School?" The reason we did was because Grace Warner, the principal, had a very high understanding of, and great sympathy for, the problems of people, and she had all types of ethnic groups in her school. She understood things. So we felt that would be the proper school, and greatly so because of Grace Warner. Then we said, "Well, what grade shall we put this girl in? What would be the logical grade?" And we said, "The grade would depend on the teacher." So I said, "Well, why don't we put down the name of the teacher we consider the best person?" So we did that and we chose Angelina Birks, a fourth grade teacher who, incidentally, was teaching immigrants the United States Naturalization Course. She was used to handling foreign people and other ethnic groups and knew how to handle them.

Then Dean Traner came up with the only thing I had heard him say that I felt was wrong

in a long, long time. He said, "Well, I think we ought to take this up with the parents." So I said immediately, "Dean, that would be the greatest mistake you could make. If you take it up with the parents, you invite them to ask every possible question, and all you'll get will be a great number of objections. There's only one approach; we have tried to talk about the school to put the person in and the teacher to put the person with. The thing for us to do now is to assume that everything is right and go ahead and put the girl in there and let her teach and say, 'There's nothing wrong with this; everything's right. She'll be a good teacher.' So let's go ahead with it." So he said, "All right, we'll do it." So we did it.

And at the end of the semester, it was interesting to note that the students asked that this girl be returned for another semester of student teaching, they liked her so well. So that was the history of the first Negro student teacher in the Washoe County system.

There was another incident that happened along that line. When I became superintendent, we had an Indian school out on Second Street near the Indian colony. Dewey Sampson, who was the leader of the Indians at that time, used to be in the superintendent's office about twice a week, complaining about the Indian school. So when I became superintendent, I looked into this. I found out that there were dogs in the schoolhouse. The teacher was not up to standard. They were using old text books; when the district had text books ready to throw away, they'd give 'em to the Indians. I felt that this was not right.

I proposed to the school board that we close down this Indian school and integrate the Indians with the white children in the schools. So there again we discussed the proposition. If we do this, where would we put them? And again, we thought of Grace

Warner in the Orvis Ring School. So the board said I could go ahead with it.

When they came that first morning to the Orvis Ring School, they were polished up, and their hair was combed. They were cleaned and dressed up. Everybody was happy about it. And they are still going to the Orvis Ring School. Grace did a tremendous job with them. She was artistic and the Indians were artistic, and she'd help them with tools for their art.

After we closed the old school down, we sold the school to a church to move it out to Fernley. We did this with the idea that if we got rid of the school, there wouldn't be any temptation to open it up again. The Indians were very happy about it. It worked out very nicely.

Another thing we did when I was superintendent was to reorganize the lunch program and put in a supervisor for the lunch program. We put Mrs. Ruth Wagner in charge of it. At the present time, they're feeding 15,000 children a day, which is quite a program.

In regard to the lunch program, a little history of that might be interesting. During the Depression, pretty large numbers of children came to school insufficiently nourished. The Federal government made available aid in securing foods for children. The PTA's undertook the setting up of lunch programs to feed these children. They developed a very, very successful program. After I became superintendent, it became a great burden on the PTA's to carry on this program. You get to a point of a reasonably large program, the purchasing of materials, and all of the work that goes along with that. So we assumed responsibility for carrying on these lunch programs. Mrs. Wagner was appointed as the director for the lunch program. She was working very closely with the PTA's in the

period in which they converted over to the schools. We worked out what we thought was a very fine lunch program where we were able to take care of children.

It's interesting to know that even today, with prosperity all over the country, that we have children come to school that have had no breakfast. Some of them have to be given some milk before they can really do any work in school. The lunch program has been, I think, significantly beneficial to children.

I have been a little disappointed that it hasn't been worked into the curriculum more to teach children the needs for a well-balanced nutrition program. I have been personally in favor of the Federal program, because they insist on a well-balanced diet. My observation has been that where a school district has handled it, quite frequently you get into a proposition of a snack bar with hot dogs, hamburgers, and things of that type, and a coke, rather than a well-balanced diet to build a good, physically fit citizenry, which is very, very important. The fact of the matter is, there is a very, very direct correlation between the physical well-being of a person and his mental ability to learn things and to handle the educational program. I think the two work very, very closely together and should be coordinated as nearly as possible.

The school lunch program is here to stay. I think it will continue to develop. It is not a problem of mother wanting a child to eat lunch at school so that she can go and play bridge; it is a problem of well-balanced food for children. Most of the parents dislike the attitude of many of our Chamber of Commerce people or other people—and I say this in due respect to the Chamber of Commerce people—who think that the problems are easy to solve. They say the mother should take care of the children all the time. Mothers are concerned very much

with traffic and they want the lunch program. They get the child to the the school; they don't want him running the streets coming home to lunch, then going back to school. They feel it's much better if he either takes his lunch or eats at school. It's just as cheap for him to eat at school as it is for him to take his lunch. The school lunch program fill a very definite need there.

I have sympathy and, I think some understanding with the problems of parents in getting their children to school. They're very concerned about the traffic hazards; the traffic hazards are great. The lunch program, in many areas, serves a need. I've been very heartily in support of it.

There was another thing that became evident to me. I have a—I don't know if it's unique—philosophy that if we follow the course of nature in many things, that it is wise to do so.

At the time I became superintendent, the grade school faculties were made up of only women: they had women principals and women teachers. My observation was that the child, when it's very, very young, turns automatically to the mother, and then as he becomes older, the father gets more and more into the picture. In applying that same idea to schools, then, possibly in the primary area you'd want women teachers. Then, as the students got a little older, you'd want some men teachers, to give them a little more contact with the men.

So we started in a program of putting men in the grade schools and it worked out very, very well, indeed. One of the unfortunate parts of it, I think, is that they have leaned pretty heavily on appointing men principals. One of that is not all because the superintendent is opposed to women, because there have been few women who have applied. We have many, many married women teaching now and

many of these women do not want to assume the responsibilities of principalships. So it's gone very much to men principals.

I still have the feeling that there are many competent women in education and that they could make very, very, fine principals. I talked to several of them and asked them if they weren't interested, but they were not interested in becoming principals. We want to utilize in education the abilities of women as principals or as administrators. We want to try to select—we should try to select—the top personnel in every area of education and promote it in that way.

Right after I became superintendent, there was discussion in regard to selling the old kindergarten school on West and Sixth Streets—the old Babcock School. They had kindergarten and first grade there. They'd had it there for years. The Babcock was the first kindergarten started in the state of Nevada. There was a lot of sentiment to it and rightly so. They were going to sell the building, and I opposed that to the board.

I told the board we should review things, that we were going to need a headquarters building in the near future and I thought that, instead of selling the building, that it would be an economy to keep the building.

Well, many of the PTA people did not want to change the name of it, and I certainly agreed with them on that. Finally, we compromised; we called it the Babcock Administration Building. We would preserve as much of it as we could (it was impossible to preserve very much of it), and we did preserve part of it.

I recall very vividly when we renovated it and changed it to a headquarters building, we had to take down the old fireplace on the ground floor, and a fireplace on the second floor. When we took down the ground floor fireplace we opened up the old, cornerstone. It had lists of names of people there who

had contributed twenty-five cents and fifty cents. They had had parties, and this, and that, to raise money to build the building. It was quite a community project for several years. The women worked on it, and finally secured money enough to build the building and start a kindergarten, which was a real achievement. Those old pioneers who did those things—we should respect them, for they really contributed to the advancement of America, to their local communities, to their states, and everything else, in doing the things they did.

When we moved into this new headquarters building, we started developing a staff, which is necessary, as you go through in school work. As the district becomes larger, you have to break down your organization into specialized areas. For instance, when I started we had two secretaries; then we had to add additional secretaries. One of them had to start taking more payroll responsibilities. One would take dictation and another would do other things. And the whole organization built up that way. Finally, we put in a business department, and tried to purchase everything on bid. The work is still growing by leaps and bounds. People wonder; they think there's too much administration, but there's a terrific amount of work to be done in handling a school program, and it takes a pretty large staff to do it.

Another thing we did was to begin a program for the handicapped children. This came about in a rather interesting way. The Health Department of the state of Nevada designated the Washoe Medical Center (it was the Washoe County Hospital at that time) as the center for all of the students in the state of Nevada who had rheumatic fever, who were then housed there. Well, the doctors taking care of these children figured the best thing they could have was something to keep them

busy. And the best thing to keep them busy was to continue their education.

So I had discussions with the doctors on it and we had a lady whose name I cannot recall at this time (...unfortunately, I'm very poor on names...) who was interested. She went out there voluntarily and helped these children. So then we put in a program of employing a person to do it, and pro-rating the costs of the different areas in the state where the students came from. Most of them cooperated very, very well, indeed.

I had one district where the man said it wasn't in his budget and so he wouldn't contribute anything. I told him there was a child lying on his back in the hospital with rheumatic fever and he needed help. If the school district wouldn't contribute anything, we would help the child, but I let that administrator know what I thought of him. I still hold the man a long way from the highest regard, because after all is said and done, a school person should be interested in children. If they're sick and ill and need help, we should be willing to try to help them.

That was the beginning of the program for handicapped children. Then we extended that, two or three years later, into taking the mentally retarded students. We secured a psychologist who'd been out at Stead Air Base to start this program. We started it in the old Anderson School. Now the program has developed to include the physically handicapped and the emotionally upset, the blind, and the deaf. They have at the present time a very fine program for handicapped children in the Washoe County School District. They received an award at the NEA Convention in 1965 for having had a very fine program for handicapped children.

It was an evolutionary process. I don't think any one person should try to take credit for having developed the whole program for

the handicapped. It was Roger Corbett who was very significant and very active trying to develop it; he's a man of tremendous human compassion. He worked very hard on it; we all worked on it and it has continued. Marvin Piccolo is presently heading it. Marvin is a very high-type, fine chap.

And then we also developed the counselor program within the schools. That is being enlarged now through federal legislation. It is a necessary program. The difficulty of the counselor program is getting personnel as it is with everything else.



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## MY LIFE WORK: THIRD PHASE

I started teaching at the time W.J. Hunting was Superintendent of Public Instruction. He was a very cooperative man. He was rather short, I imagine five-foot-six, a very happy individual with a good sense of humor, and intent on trying to do a very good piece of work for the schools. A state Superintendent is not ordinarily in the position of doing anything revolutionary; he tries to promote better schools throughout the state in every way he can. He tries to get legislation promoting the schools, and Hunting was very active in this. Walter J. Anderson ran against Hunting for state superintendent when I was out at Wells. Mr. Anderson came to me and asked for my support and I told him that I thought Mr. Hunting was doing a good job as Superintendent and as long as he continued, I'll support him; but if Anderson defeated him and did a good job, I'd support him. Anderson defeated Hunting.

Hunting was an alert man: he was a good educator. After he was defeated for Superintendent, he went to Lovelock as Superintendent, stayed there about four years,

and then went down to California. Walter Anderson went in as Superintendent and did what I think was a reasonably good job.

Then when I was in Winnemucca, Walter Anderson was running for his second term as State Superintendent. Roger Corbett and I got out and campaigned for him, and Humboldt County was the only county in the state that Anderson carried that year. He was defeated for his second term by Chauncey Smith, whom I did not personally rate as a top man for the superintendency. I felt that he was more of a politician than an educator. He had a chap from Winnemucca helping him with his campaign, and the campaign tactics that he used were not of the best. Smith was in office several years when he passed on with a heart attack, and Mildred Bray was appointed.

Miss Bray had been the deputy in the office, and was fully apprised of school problems, although her qualifications to be Superintendent were sometimes questioned. She was fully aware of the problems of the Superintendency and the things that should be done as Superintendent. Mildred served

three terms and was going into her fourth term when she was defeated. I considered Mildred a very good Superintendent of Public Instruction. She worked hard. We had come at that time to a point that I thought some changes should be made, and I supported Glenn Duncan when he ran for office. Mildred was a little upset about me, but I told her very frankly why, and we still maintained our friendship through it. This was after the war; things were changing quite rapidly, and the problems were changing and I felt that we had to have somebody that was a little more aggressive than she was becoming at the time. She had started out very progressively.

After Glenn Duncan was elected, we needed additional finance in the schools in the state of Nevada. Glenn was a great proponent of the sales tax, and he took a terrific personal beating all over the state for his stand on the sales tax, but it finally came about. It is interesting to go back and review some of the activities at that time.

Along about, I guess it must have been 1946, a group of us had a meeting down in Tonopah. Maude Frazier was there, Dean Traner, if I remember correctly, and I think Glenn Duncan was there. Guild Gray, I believe, was a superintendent at that time and he was there. A chap by the name of Fish from southeastern Nevada was there. I was at the meeting. We were greatly in need of additional school support at that time. In many school districts the school tax at that time was set up on a basis of an elementary tax, a kindergarten tax, a high school tax, and a bond tax, allowing twenty-five cents (ad valorem) for each one of these taxes. When you reached the dollar limit, you couldn't go any further. In many areas, the state had reached the dollar limit, and we needed additional state support. So we met at Tonopah and discussed the whole thing.

I recall very vividly that Mr. Fish had a formula that he wanted to put in for school support. I recall Dean Traner saying that he didn't know much about the formulas, but he had set down in a practical way how much money we needed to set things up. So we finally agreed that five hundred thousand dollars would be a good sum to ask for. Then as we thought back we thought, well, maybe we should ask for a million dollars and then we might get the five hundred thousand. So we worked it all out, and asked for a million dollars. And lo and behold, the legislature gave it to us! We were greatly surprised. It increased the state aid from two hundred and seventy-five dollars a teacher to seventeen hundred and seventy-five dollars a teacher on the basis of twenty ADA, which meant that the schools had considerable additional money to work with at that time. We were in the inflation period. The costs had gone up terrifically after the war, and we were unable to raise teachers' salaries. Things were in a very, very bad situation. The first thing we did with that additional money was to raise teachers' salaries so they could afford to live, because it was almost impossible to get teachers at that time. There was a terrific turnover of teachers. It was extremely difficult for the schools to function and this additional state aid made it possible to function for a short time. Then we went through the process and finally after this million had been granted, we got back into these same difficulties again.

In about 1951, we had all the superintendents in the state meet including the state superintendent. We discussed what might be done at that meeting. We felt that it would be a good proposition if we could get a citizens committee to study the school situation in the state and make some reports on it. We had assistance from the financial expert in school work at the University of

California, a man by the name of Morphet; he was a very fine man in school finance. He came up and advised us, and said that this would take time, but the citizen group was a proper approach to it.

So we discussed the thing, and we talked to Governor Russell about it. Governor Russell had gone in as a very conservative man, but he realized the difficulties and he rather welcomed this. We took it up with the legislature, and the legislature passed legislation to have the governor appoint a committee to study the school situation, to employ some group to carry on the survey.

The Peabody study was developed through that procedure and was probably the best study ever made of education in Nevada. Their recommendations were taken quite liberally. The governor's committee eliminated some of the recommendations they made, but basically they accepted the recommendations. They recommended the consolidation of the school districts into county districts and to set up a formula for school finance. This went into effect in 1956.

Also in this report it was shown that there was lack of funds. So Glenn Duncan and his proposal for a sales tax were supported by many of us in education. The legislature realized that there was going to be a need for additional money, so in 1955, they passed the sales tax. People in Las Vegas got a petition out after the sales tax passed and asked for a referendum. The referendum vote was put on the ballot and a committee was formed to support this proposition for the sales tax. The committee functioned mainly out of Reno. The Nevada State Education Association donated five thousand dollars for this campaign to continue the sales tax. It was thought at that time that the gambling institutions would offer money; they didn't offer any money at all, so actually the money

given by the State Education Association carried the referendum on the sales tax. The committee used the slogan, "SOS, Save Our Schools," and the thing went over. And that has been a boon to the schools and to the state ever since.

When we went into the county unit setup, the legislature was aware of the fact that there was a shortage of money. They put in the sales tax in 1955, due, in a great part, to the efforts of Glenn Duncan. There were many others who cooperated with him, but he really took a courageous stand on it and insisted on it. Then from the Peabody Study came the consolidation of the schools from about two hundred districts to seventeen districts. Just to make it a generous portion for the new superintendents, they changed from the calendar year to the fiscal year. Then they changed the bookkeeping setup. So we really had quite a chore when we went into the county unit.

The problems of the county unit were basically the same as they were in the local school districts; that's a matter of additional building, additional school finance and the securing of good teachers. So we continued on working that.

What they did at that time was to consolidate the entire county into a single district. They took members from each school board and made up the consolidated school board. They took two members from the board in Sparks. Then they divided up the Reno area. There were, I think, three people from the Reno area, one from up in Gerlach, and one from the south of Reno and Lake Tahoe (Incline and that area) and Verdi. It made a board of seven; in a county this size, the law calls for a school board of seven. I was appointed superintendent, and Procter Hug, who was superintendent of the Sparks district, was selected assistant superintendent.

The first thing we had to do was to set up the organization. I charted administrative structure for the district. The board members were not enthusiastic about it; I was, because it would set the pattern for not only setting up your basic program, but your total program as well.

One of the first things we did was to put in a personnel man to select teachers.

There was some opposition to putting in a personnel man; the statement was made by Mr. Hug that held work only three months a year when we had him selected. We found that he worked twelve months a year and was busy the whole time. Selection of teachers is difficult and extremely important because your schools are just as good as your teachers. For instance, I have spoken about the ungraded primary. Without good teachers, the ungraded primary will fail. I think of a discussion with a man from Stanford University, who was considered a specialist in elementary education. He said that he was very much opposed to the ungraded primary. So I asked him, "What is your alternative?" And he said, "Above average teachers in small classes of about fifteen students." Well, that'll solve any problem; but where do you get above average people? Above average you're limited. I would agree that small classes taught by above-average teachers would work, but I wouldn't agree that you'd have money enough to make it work, nor would I agree that you'd be able to select personnel to handle it. So those things are not resolved quite as easily as his statements would make it appear.

There had been opposition to consolidating of schools. I was amazed to find out that the Sparks School Board opposed it. Sparks was a very rapidly growing community; it was a bedroom city. They were extremely limited for building funds, and had not only half-day sessions; they would have had quarter-day

sessions. When we got into the county district setup, immediately we started building schools in Sparks. Our major building program was over in the Sparks area for the first two or three years.

However, the county unit was accepted much better than I thought it would be. We had pretty good agreement in the school board. We had a problem up at Gerlach of trying to take care of their situation. They had no place for the teachers to live, so we built some apartments there. Then we put all of the outlying districts on the salary schedule Reno had. It made it possible for us to get teachers. We gave some achievement tests immediately after we went into county system, and the Gerlach students were a year behind in their education; within two years we brought them up by selecting better teachers and having a place for the teachers to live.

Then always, of course, comes the proposition of closing down unneeded schools. The Peabody study people said that we should close down inefficient and one room schools. To maintain the schools, they would have to be broken up into a class setup. That is, you would have a first grade class, a second grade class, and so on.

We closed down several schools. It was a little interesting. I went out to the Bonham district, which is way up north, a very isolated district. When we went up there, they had some lavatories that were built like funnels. I guess they were fifty to seventy-five years back. The odor in the building was terrible on a warm day! They had had a tax rate, I think, of fifteen cents. Immediately when they came in the county, they clamored to have everything fixed. We faced up to it, and fixed it up. We built a teacherage there—they had no place for a teacher to live. And then we fixed up the plumbing, dug a well, so that they'd have a water supply—they had no water

supply—and we fixed the school up. Even then there were only six or seven students in the school (there still are only a few).

The conception of the Peabody plan was equalization of educational opportunity throughout the state. When we went into the county system, we felt it was up to us to give the children out in Bonham District, as well as in other districts, the same opportunity for an education other children had. The basis for doing that was to get a good teacher; by putting in an adequate water supply, build a teacherage so the teacher had a place to live, and to bring the plumbing and other facilities up to par, and give the teacher something to work with. It was quite an outstanding example of what happened under this type of thing.

We closed the Franktown school, which was a very small school out in the valley toward Carson. That was a very easy operation because some of the people out there—the Franktown school was not too far from Carson City—were sending their children over to Carson City.

We proposed closing the Glendale school and it really was a battle. They even had protest meetings. We went over there—Mr. Hug and I—and talked to the people. They had no conception of the financial structures, how the schools got their money. They had felt they were supporting their school, but they were getting a tremendous amount of state aid; it was what kept them running. We in the larger areas had fought to give them this state aid. And they thought they were supporting their own school. So it was really quite a battle. The amazing thing is that the leaders in this battle, within a year after we closed this school and sent the students into Sparks, were very happy with the change.

Then we had a little place out at Pyramid Lake. It was rather interesting; they had a little

school there in a railroad car. It was certainly not an adequate educational setup, and we closed it down with very little opposition. The fact of the matter is most of the children were moving out, so the Lakeside school at Pyramid was very easy to close.

When we got into the closing of the Galena school, they really opposed consolidation. They had had a situation out there where they took over some of these children from the welfare program, and farmed them out with different families. They would arrange to secure some of these students so they would have enough children to run the school. There was tremendous objection to closing the school down there. They got up petitions; petitions were presented the school board. They got everybody in Reno, Carson City, and everyplace else to sign them. Then they even tried to take it up with the legislature. But it didn't get very far with legislature; the school board closed the school. And since the closing, they've had no difficulty.

It was interesting to notice at the opening of the county school district that we were able to reduce our school tax, which in Reno School District Number Ten, was—and this amazes people when they realize it—\$1.52, the overall county and local school tax combined; that's all a person paid, \$1.52 per \$100 ad valorem. I recall very vividly a couple of years ago, a man came over to the legislature and protested school taxes saying that all we were doing was spending money. The tax was a \$1.50, 2¢ less than it was earlier and he didn't realize it.

After we went into the county setup, we reduced the tax to \$1.20 1/2, county-wide, so that there was a reduction. But with the increase in students and the increased responsibilities, increases of salaries, additional teachers, and everything else, that was used up and it wasn't very long—about

two or three years—and the rate was \$1.50 again. Our problems still remained; a problem of building buildings and trying to get an educational program. That moved much more slowly in the consolidated setup than it did in the Reno District Number Ten, where you had more uniformity of thinking about it. We finally got things moving along fairly well without great opposition. I think now it's moving quite well; there's no opposition to the county unit that I know of. I think people have accepted it, and they feel that it's good.

It was interesting to know at that time, too, when they consolidated the schools, there was talk of consolidating the cities of Reno and Sparks. Since that time Sparks has grown from a bedroom area to a warehouse area and they put a couple of big stores over there. So although there was some talk of then joining with Reno, I think that has probably died out. I think they'll go on warring between the two communities forever more!

In the county's building program, we started a proposition. I say "we started"—they had in the early days named schools after individuals; they had named the Orvis Ring School after Orvis Ring, who was state superintendent; they had named the Mary S. Doten School after Mary Doten, who was a teacher in the public schools; so it was not a unique thing for us.

When we started the building program again, there had been a long period when they built no buildings. They named the B. D. Billingshurst Junior High School after Mr. Billingshurst, superintendent. But there was a long lull from the time when Billingshurst was built, I believe in 1928, until the new emergency. We had a member on the board at that time, Ray Marks, who was very much opposed to naming after individuals. When we built the Sierra Vista School, Ray selected the name.

Incidentally, the Sierra Vista School was built out of surplus property from Stead Air Base. We got some of the surplus buildings and put them together. Theoretically, it was supposed to be an economical procedure. It was not an economical procedure; we didn't get as good a school out of it and it cost just about as much money as it would to build a new school.

That was the experience all over the country. They built a junior college down near Monterey, California, out of surplus buildings. I talked to the superintendent there and he said after they got through with it, it cost them just as it would cost for a new building, and they didn't have nearly as much. So there was really no economy in that, but the feeling in the community was that there was great economy in it, and we built the one building. Sparks moved in at that time and put in a lunch project in a surplus building, and moved a surplus building for a shower room on the athletic field and another for a storeroom. But the source was exhausted early, which was fortunate. So that was stopped, and we went into new buildings.

I would credit attorney William Sanford with being one who promoted naming schools after individuals. He was very fond of E. O. Vaughn, the former principal of the high school and former superintendent, he wanted to name a building after him. When Mr. Marks left the board—he was somewhat prejudiced against E. O. Vaughn and he was prejudiced against naming schools after individuals—I worked with Mr. Sanford and we were able to get the junior high named the E. O. Vaughn Junior High School. Then the pattern was pretty well set. They started naming after individuals, and have carried that on. Now they have a number of schools named after individuals.

Some say that naming after individuals is a fair method of naming buildings. I would say that it is not, because I think there are some individuals that are overlooked, and you get a little politics in it. There are some people that are overlooked. I think Dr. Effie Mack was an outstanding teacher in Reno High School for years and years and years. No building has been named after her. The school board did name a street after Herb Foster, Foster Way, out near Reno High School. He passed away just as we were completing the building and they named Foster Field after him also. But I think sometimes our outstanding teachers are overlooked in favor of administrators. It's not the fairest thing, although it does give recognition to many people who have served well in the community. I am in favor of naming after people, but I don't think it's completely fair. Of course, nothing in the world is completely fair, so I guess we have to face up to that.

There were nominations by the board members, and other people turned in names. As superintendent, I submitted a couple of different names. Very largely, we would sit back as school people and allow the board to nominate the people. Sometimes we'd drop a hint of "Here's a person who's a good person to consider." You wouldn't say, "Name it after him," you'd say, "He's a good person to consider along with the other names." And they generally had three or four names to consider. So it is not a proposition of just selecting one name. I remember when we named the Roger Corbett School; there were several names submitted at that time. I was in a unique position; I didn't want to oppose naming the school after Roger Corbett, but I felt it should have been a junior high school or senior high school named after him, because he was quite an outstanding man in education. But he had just resigned, and here

comes a school they're going to build, and the board members want to name it after him. So I didn't oppose it, although I did. I favor naming larger institution after him.

Among my other unique relationships was that with Mr. John Sanford of the Reno Evening Gazette. He and I got on like a couple of strange bulldogs. The fact of the matter is, when I was heading the committee for the charter change in Reno, he said that that was the only time that Earl Wooster and he had ever agreed on anything. I always got along very well with the Nevada State Journal and Joe McDonald. Joe is an outstanding citizen in my mind; as well as being a very reasonable man. I approached Joe on our first bond issues and talked with him, and secured his support. I've always had very fine relationships with Paul Leonard. We may not see eye to eye, but our differences are honest differences that can be resolved. We have held respect and admiration for each other; I think very highly of Paul Leonard. We've gotten along very well so we were able to get his support and he helped in many, many things.

I never could get a head-on collision with John Sanford. He would oppose things and, if I went down to see him, he would just grunt, and that was about all. Now with Paul, I could sit down and talk, and it was always easy to discuss. If you had differences, you knew what the differences were; you could approach them and it was not difficult. But Mr. Sanford always took the attitude that we were asking for too much money in the school district. I think my record will show when I was out at Wells, the most important question H. A. Agee ever asked me was, "Do you have enough money?" And I never took advantage of it, or went up to ask for more money than I thought we actually needed to run a good school. I could have asked for twice the sum and probably gotten it because he would have fought for

it. I have no recollections at any time in Reno School District or the Washoe County District of ever asking for more money than we thought we needed to run the school district. I think part of being a good school superintendent is trying to keep the costs down as much as you can, commensurate with the needs of the district. I don't say I think in any big setup that you couldn't find places where there's money that has been ill-spent. I don't think you'd ever find any large institution, private or public, that couldn't do better. But I think the intent is the important thing. The budgets were presented to the school boards, and discussed. School board members are just as conscientious about the costs as are legislators or councilmen, or county commissioners, or anybody else. They don't want to waste the taxpayer's money, and we tried to watch that as closely as we could.

Mr. Sanford always took the attitude that we were trying to wring every possible cent out of the taxpayer; the fact of the matter is, I think an indication that we were not trying to overspend was when we went into the county district, we reduced the tax rate from a \$1.50 to a \$1.20 1/2, and then we raised it only as we had to raise it. You couldn't talk with him on that; he just wanted to write editorials in the paper, making statements without going into it. It was extremely difficult to deal with him, and it still is extremely difficult to deal with him. He is a peculiar individual and maybe I was a peculiar individual, too, but, at least I tried. We couldn't see eye to eye. He had a rather bitter attitude toward things, which was unfortunate; and still has. To get specific instances of our differences is extremely difficult, because he was opposed to almost everything. As I say, it would be useful if you could sit down and talk with a person and bring everything out in the open and then answer the questions in regard to it, to establish what you're doing.

Now we were able to do that with the Nevada Taxpayer's Association. Their people came in, and we would be able to sit down and go over the budget with them, and talk about it, and go into all the ramifications. They might feel there were areas where we could save some, but they were honest differences and we didn't ever have any great deal of trouble with the Taxpayer's Association. They're very fair in everything. With Joe McDonald, we went down and saw him about the bond issues, particularly the original bond issues, when it was very, very difficult. And we got very fine cooperation from him, but you couldn't do that with Mr. Sanford. I never was able to make contact with him.

Now, Mr. Charles Stout, the head of the Reno papers here, you can sit down and talk with him, you can approach him, you can talk with him. So far as I'm concerned, you don't have to have agreement, but you should have understanding. I was never able to establish that with John Sanford.

I think there's a very interesting angle that might be considered about public relations with the PTAs. The PTA situation in Reno for a number of years was extremely difficult because they held to a local PTA and did not go into the National Congress of PTA. They were tied in partially through the fact that they wanted their membership to belong to the Federation of Women's Clubs. They held that they supported the Federation of Women's Clubs, so the op— position came mainly from the fact that they didn't want to withdraw from the Federation. To go into the National PTA, they had to withdraw. So when I first became superintendent in 1944, and thereafter for number of years, it was extremely difficult to try to work toward going into the National Congress of PTAs, and yet not to have great difficulty with the local PTA.

My memory is bad on names, and I would like to give names, but I'm afraid if I do, that I'm going to miss some of the very fine people I know. We had some very sincere people who were very much opposed to the Congress of PTA'S. Letty Southworth was one of them, and yet, when we went into the Congress, Letty was very loyal and she did a fine thing; she kept all the records of the old association. She did some other very fine things, too. I have worked with Letty on the Reno Recreation Commission for twenty years now, and I'm very fond of her. We differed on the PTA, but that particular point was minor.

I was trying to think of the name of another woman. Oh, in the early days, Mrs. C. W. Mapes, Mrs. Macphee, and Mrs. Mack. Mrs. Macphee was an opponent of the Congress of PTA's, but she worked very hard. She worked on the ditch covering project. She was a tremendous worker. But she was very, very much opposed to going into the Congress of PTA, and I think was instrumental in holding it up.

Now, I don't want to imply by that we did not get cooperation from the local PTA; we did. We got very fine cooperation from them. Their program was a little different from the Congress program, however; they were more inclined toward local projects in the schools, whereas the National PTA was more on educational projects; that's more their objective. Finally, the Congress of PTA did come into the field here. Sparks was in it; then Reno School District Number Ten and the other PTA's went into the Congress of PTA's.

People have a right to their opinions; you just have to work around them and try to get the thing set up as you see fit. And you just have to realize that in any program you're going to strike this type of thing. It takes time to set it up. Of course, the superintendent was put in a bad spot, because he had both factions

working on him, trying to get him to take an open stand on it, and the minute you took an open stand, you were going to hurt somebody. If you took an open stand, for the local, why, the Congress people would work harder. So I always felt that taking rather an uncommitted attitude would really help it rather than to take a definite stand on it. I took a definite stand in certain other areas, but I felt I'd help this more by not taking a definite stand.

Always I attended PTA meetings, worked with the PTA; in all of our projects, educational and otherwise, we had very, very fine cooperation from them in every respect. I feel very definitely that PTA is a fine contact with parents. I had wanted to hold some educational meetings with the PTAs. I discussed it with the members of the Congress of PTA's and they were enthusiastic about it. I wanted to hold educational meetings in the different buildings to take up the different programs in education, and have an open discussion on them. It's done in several areas in the United States and the attendance had been very, very good, and the interest very, very high. My feeling was that if you want to put in a program, it will never be successful unless you have understanding. The way to get understanding is to have meetings, discussions. You'll get a few people that'll come in that are obstructionists. They want to wreck the thing, but you just have to face up to the fact they'll be there and go ahead. I'm very much of an advocate that open discussions are beneficial to everybody; that if there are weaknesses in the program, they can be brought out. I don't think that educators have all the answers to everything; I think that the lay public and the mothers and fathers and parents are interested. Sometimes they have ideas that can be very, very beneficial; and if they aren't good and they have the ideas, the thing to do is to discuss them and show

them the weaknesses, and, if they are good, to adopt them. I think if you do it that way, you strengthen your whole school system and you build up within the public an appreciation of education that we don't have enough of.

I had one meeting on this idea at the school board, and then the thing died a-borning. But I still think that, had we had education meetings throughout the community—oh, take, for instance, on the ungraded primary—and had open discussions on it all the way through, if we'd taken grading systems and oh, anything, it would have been a good thing. For instance, at the present time, they're putting in new mathematics, new language, and all that thing. If they had open discussions with the public in several schools, taking a different school each month, and go around to these schools, possibly consolidating the junior high school level at a meeting, consolidating maybe the grade schools within an area at a meeting, and then discussing and showing the parents this, and explaining it to them, I think it would go a long ways toward helping the program. So far as I know, that has not been done. I think it would be very, very worthwhile to do that so that people would know what is going on.

With the new program of research and laboratory work and experimental schools that this new education bill carries, I think it's going to be extremely important to keep the public current regarding what's going on. If we don't, we get so far ahead that we are very apt to get a reaction and lose all the benefits. I think it's extremely important. People say, "Well, people won't come out for it." Well, you can set it up so if you only get ten people, it's worthwhile. I think they could set it up so they could get a much greater number than that, and get interest. Just the minute a parent strikes some trouble, his boy comes home, or his girl comes home, and says, "I don't

understand this mathematics," and the parent tries to help him, and doesn't understand it, he's going to go to a meeting to find out about it. I think that's true in the whole area.

For instance, you could discuss that summer school program they are putting in now; have meetings on that—what the objectives are, what they are trying to do, what the Opportunities are for students. You could discuss all that with parents. I think it would be tremendously valuable and, so far as I know, that has not been done. I know there are certain members of the staff that would like very, very much to do that, and to allow people to ask questions and show the benefits and the advantages of it: what the objectives are; what they're trying to do. I think it would be very, very worthwhile to let the public have more information on this type of thing. I get warmed up on that, and I don't want to start talking on that type of thing, but I do think those things are tremendously important.

I could figure out some very fine education meetings. It takes time; it takes work; it may take, say, an additional member on the staff to do it. But in the long run, I think it is an economy; and I think, if we believe in democracy, that the way to make democracy work is to take everything up to the people. So I'm a great advocate of that approach. I'm very, very sorry I was not able to put that over, because I wanted to very much. I thought it would have been a fine program, but I had timidity on the part of the staff members, timidity on the part of the school board—somebody was afraid somebody'd come up with a question we couldn't answer.

I had those come up; I attended a meeting out at the Veteran's Memorial School, and a bond issue was coming up. The committee of Mrs. Glass and Mrs. First and a group of people were there at that meeting when a reporter who had had a few drinks attacked

me with a loaded question. Everybody caught their breath, and I realized that if I didn't answer that question, I was sunk. I had said that I would try to answer any question honestly. If I didn't know the answer, I would say so, and I would try to answer it honestly. So, he gave me this loaded question. I knew it was up to me to answer it, so I stepped forward to answer it, and I got a tremendous round of applause for the answer. We went ahead and got the bond issue through.

You have to face up to that type of thing; and if you're sincere and honest about it, people will know it, and you'll get their support. I think the same thing is true with an educational program; that if you're honest and sincere about it, and go out to the public and try to explain it, that you'll get their support. I think that's necessary.

From the time the PTA—the early Mother's Club—established the first kindergarten in the state of Nevada, clear up to the present time, the PTA has been very instrumental in the helping of the schools in Washoe County. And they've had good PTA'S. Now, I read in the paper about a lack of interest in PTAs and I don't think that is a fault of the PTA. I think it's a fault of the general attitude of the public, because that is not only PTAs; in everything there's a lack of interest.

My main "complaint" in regard to what's happening to the public now, I think television has done more to cut out interest on the part of the part of the public in many things. People want to look at television, but some of the programs leave more than considerable to be desired. I think that has gone a long ways to cutting down interest in public affairs and I think it's unfortunate. It has changed the political picture by giving the candidate who makes a good television picture more of a chance to get elected, which I think is unfortunate. After all is said and done, a man

who is homely and who is not necessarily a good speaker might be a very good person to elect. When he has to compete on television, it makes it a little rough on him. It's also increased the expenses of the campaign. The position TV is taking and the programs it's putting out have really hurt the public attitude toward many things. There are probably other factors at work too, but I think that it is one of the factors. It's cut down public interest in many, many things.



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## MY LIFE WORK: FOURTH PHASE

I retired in 1959. I was tired and wasn't very interested in new jobs. But after a month of rest and relaxation and nothing to do, I was asked to take the executive secretaryship of the NSEA. After thinking it over (they had no other candidates and they came back to me two or three times) I took it over and tried to build it up. I was there for six years.

There's a great deal of misunderstanding about the Nevada State Education Association and the NEA. Now, basically, their position is their trying to be of benefit to education, rather than just a political arm to work with legislatures to get things. It's interesting to know that the NEA, for instance—and this filters down into the state and local associations—has committees on curriculum. They're working on all these things, and putting large amounts of money into them. But they never get any publicity on that. If they go to Congress for an education bill, or if we go to the state legislature here, immediately we are a pressure group. We are a pressure group to that extent, but that is not the major part of our activities.

For instance, we have adopted a code of ethics. We've come to the legislature to try to get them to set up a professional practices commission which would help us in trying to see that teachers follow the code of ethics. It sets some pretty high standards and we're interested in having high standards, because good schools are dependent very largely on good teachers—teachers with good ethical outlooks. We're quite interested in that. For instance, the local association here has asked the school board to put into the new teachers' contracts that they must abide by the code of ethics. The board agreed, which I think is quite a step forward. Now, that is not an increase in salaries and it is not legislation to help the teachers, other than trying to get better teachers. I think every school board and every parent should be interested in seeing that the code of ethics is carried out to try to help promote better teachers who have a greater understanding of ethical procedures in teaching. The code covers four areas. One is commitment to the student. Commitment to the community is number two. In other words,

your responsibility toward the student, your responsibility toward the community. And then there's commitment to the profession. In other words, you should have high professional standards. And the last one is commitment to the professional employment practices, which is the only one of four that gets down really to the areas of employment.

It was privileged to work on the committee that set up this code of ethics. They did quite an interesting thing; they had set up a tentative code of ethics, then called a meeting in Washington. They had about 190 people there, representing all areas of education: private education, public education, college education, secondary, elementary, kindergarten, all of it. Everything was represented there. They broke these people up into groups of about twelve or thirteen people; and they went over the whole suggested code and worked the whole thing over. Then they had a joint meeting to consider what they called "sticky points." Then they broke this group down in new committees of twelve. They went in and took up the "sticky points," and in three days they came up with this code of ethics. It hasn't been changed materially; they have made two or three very minor changes in it, but it was almost a completely new code. It was quite a unique experience. It has now been adopted by all fifty states, so we're very happy about that.

Since I have been in office, we've had an increase in enrollment. We have set up some committees; one is a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Committee, which looks out to some extent for the welfare of teachers, but primarily it is interested in seeing that you have good schools and that teachers obey the code of ethics.

We had one case in White Pine County. We went out there on the only real investigation

we have made. We had set up a select committee to do this with a school board member, a superintendent, a high school principal and grade school teachers on it. We went out and spent three days out there at the hearing. We opened it up so anybody could come in; anybody who wanted to appear before the committee and give information—it had to be direct information; not hearsay, but direct information. We issued a report in book form. Then they held a recall of the White Pine School Board and elected a new school board, selected a new superintendent, and now everybody out in Ely is very happy. We think we did something for education, not for the teachers alone, but for education for the child in White Pine County. That is the overall purpose of that committee.

The NEA has held a number of investigations. In these investigations, very frequently they'll criticize the teacher's association, they'll criticize the community, they'll point up where corrections can be made and publicized so people will have information on it. It's done a lot of good.

Another thing we tried to do was get a headquarters building. We're working on that now; we have it up for bid. We hope to establish a headquarters building in Carson City. Incidentally, I'm trying to get it set up so we can cooperate with the PTA's and give them some office space over there, or at least give them quarters during legislative sessions. They can meet in our building while the legislature is meeting, and work from it during the time.

Then, I have also proposed to the board that instead of a retired person as secretary, that they get career people. The job is too big for a retired person to take, because his interests are diminishing, rather than increasing. If they get career people, they'll have people whose job and whole life work is

going to be to do this, and I think they'll get a much better organization and, too, much more for education. So, that, basically, is my work in NSEA.



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## HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

Probably the most signal honor I received was the honorary doctorate from the University of Nevada. They give a very limited number of honorary doctorates, and I consider that a very great honor. I think always in that type of thing, you have to have some person who has been interested in your career, knows what you have done, and feels that you are worthy of an honor and promote it. That was done at Nevada by Dr. Harold Brown in my particular case. He got all the facts and information and figures, then promoted it with the College of Education, then with the faculty and with the staff, they took it up with the Board of Regents, and I was given this recognition, which I consider as very much of an honor.

There are many people who look down on an honorary doctorate—they talk about an earned doctorate, not an honorary doctorate. One of my friends commented to me at one time, “Well, they talk about an earned doctorate and an honorary doctorate, but some of these people who have honorary doctorates have done more

to earn them than some of the people who have the doctorates.” I make no claims on that score; I am proud of the fact that I was given the honorary doctorate, because I’m very fond of the University of Nevada and been interested in it for many, many years. I’m a graduate from the University, so I felt it was a signal honor when I was given this doctorate.

When I was going to Stanford University getting my Master’s Degree in Education, I was elected to Phi Delta Kappa, which is an educational honor society. I guess that I’m probably the oldest member in that organization in the state of Nevada. They have a local chapter here now, but I think I’ve probably belonged to it longer than anybody in the state. I was given their Distinguished Service Award in 1959.

I had the privilege of acting as president of the Nevada Inter-Scholastic League at a critical time in its career.

I was president of the Lions Club, in Winnemucca, Nevada, right after its organization.

I also spent six years on the Selective Service Board during the War, which may not be much of an honor, but it was a lot of work. I think it was an area where a person could be of tremendous service to his country. It's interesting that, during World War I, we used to sit down and chat—we were up in Verens, France—right after the Armistice, we'd sit around in bull sessions. All of us said, "Well, the next war, we're going to stay at home and send the boys away." And here I was, in World War II, on the Selective Service board, not only selecting the boys, but going down to the train and seeing them away, carrying out the thing we'd talked about twenty-five or thirty years before.

On the Selective Service Board, we took an attitude which was not taken by very many Selective Service Boards. Chick Gazin of Sparks was chairman of the board. He's a very, very fine man with a very positive outlook on life. We sat down and determined that we were taking these young men, we were inducting these people into the service, and that we had several responsibilities. One of them was to take those people down to the station, see them off to the train, and let them know that we not only had inducted them into the service, but we would try to help them in the future. I think it paid dividends.

Incidentally, I discovered a very interesting rule of life, I think, in this. When we had inducted all of the single men up to approximately thirty-five years of age, we then had to go into the induction of those above thirty-five (single men) before we took in the married men. We inducted those men all in one group, and we found out, to our sorrow, that they were very irresponsible. Many came down there drunk. They didn't care about anything. The next month we inducted the married men without children. It was a complete change of psychology; these

married people had a sense of responsibility. Their wives came down to see them off. The men said, "Well, we've got a job to do; we'll do the job and come back". It was a completely different attitude, and, to me, it was amazing. With that knowledge, I applied that to the selection of teachers. I always arched an eyebrow when it came to selecting a teacher who was unmarried and over thirty years of age. I thought that possibly he could carry some of the irresponsible features that were carried by the men we inducted into the service. I think the rule holds reasonably true.

We were pressured many, many times to try to give deferments to people. For instance, when it came up to inducting men, married men, particularly those with children, we found that some of the children were just being born. Well, we called the men all in together and had a talk with them, and told them that we would induct them as soon as they had gotten their homes organized, so that they could leave home and feel that their wives would have a degree of security. Now, it's amazing the results that had. These people came in and they set up the time that they thought they could get organized. They came in and volunteered to go in at that time. It was Quite an amazing reaction, and they felt very grateful that we'd given them the opportunity. We hadn't just said, "You have to go in." We allowed them to get their homes organized before they had to go into the service. It was quite rewarding to see this type of thing.

We felt that acting in the Selective Service capacity, we had certain responsibilities, that there still should be recognition given to people, that they had problems and we should give them the opportunity to resolve their problems before they took them into the service. Our attitude was that if we took a man into the service, his attitude should be such that he was willing to serve; if you took him

in and he opposed it, you hadn't accomplished anything, because you wouldn't have a soldier. But if he felt you had given him consideration, that his home was in order, then he would go in and he would be of good service to the country; otherwise, there's no reason inducting a man. All you do is clutter up the Army and you've accomplished nothing.

I have been a member of the Reno Recreation Commission since its formation in 1944, and am currently (1965) chairman of the commission.

The Recreation Commission in Reno has a rather interesting background. Originally Reno High School was located very close, adjacent, to the business community and it was a very, very poor location for a high school. The students, during the lunch hour and after school, would immediately go downtown. They'd flood the community; they had no place to go, so they'd go into the stores. It was a kind of a training ground for shoplifting and things of that type. It was not a good setup.

Letty Southworth felt this very keenly, and became active during the War in trying to get a downtown meeting place. That was her original conception; a downtown meeting place for students. She came to me with the idea, and I worked very closely with Letty on this. Finally, we did establish such a place, but the idea was taking hold at time that the need for greater activity for students or for young people was greatly manifest. It developed so that the City Council in 1944 established the Recreation Commission.

The Recreation Commission then got very busy in trying to set up programs for young people, in trying to develop a recreation program for the people of Reno—let me say the people of Reno, because it encompassed more than just young people. We tried to set up areas for families, for picnicking, and that

type of thing; for their enjoyment, for we think it is extremely important.

City Ordinance Number 691, creating a Community Recreation Commission of the city of Reno, and defining the powers and duties of such a commission was passed in 1944. It was advertised in the paper in March 26, 1944. Then they amended it in 1946.

When the commission was established in 1944, Letty Southworth and I were both selected as original members of the commission. We had our ups and downs in the early stages of the commission. We were empowered to select a Recreation Director and we made selections, but they would come and go. Then we secured W. C. "Win" Higgins to act as Recreation Director. Win was a great family man. I think his major contribution to the recreation program, was to set up family recreation, which I feel is very, very good. He was followed by Rocco Spina. I am the only one that has continued on with the commission for the full time. Letty was on, then she was off for a while, now (1965) she's back on the commission.

At that time, it was extremely difficult to get people to be interested in parks and the enlarging of the park system within the city of Reno. Now, within just the last few years, there's been tremendous interest in it.

We had our difficulties at the time they put in the new city council about 1958. They fired Win Higgins and employed Rocco Spina. We didn't even know that they were going to take such action. They also fired the fire chief, and the chief of police. That was a notoriously bad council.

The Commission had considerable difficulty with the council. We were rather aggressive in trying to develop the Dick Taylor Park, so they centered their wrath on me as one individual. They went so far as to name a street after me—which was two blocks long—

with the idea that if they named that street, they'd never name another street after me. It's called Wooster Way and is out near Wooster High School. Those were their tactics.

When I chaired the Committee of One Thousand to change the charter, they fired me from the Recreation Commission.. Then, the city election came up and the new city council immediately put me back on.

The Recreation Commission presented me with a desk set for my services. There was considerable kidding about that, because after I was back on, I took it down and told them I'd better return it to them, and they got quite a kick out of it.

Mrs. Walter Herz was quite active in the early days of the Recreation Commission, establishing the junior ski program, which has been an outstanding ski program in the whole United States. We also developed a very good baseball program prior to the time Little League came in. Then, the Little League came in and they took over a number of the players. We have worked with them and we still have a baseball program for the boys that can't get into the Little League.

We also have programs in art in all that type of activity in different playground areas. We think overall it's been a very good program.

Now, the attitude is to build more parks. When I was superintendent, I was always a great advocate for trying to cooperate with the city and build city-school district parks, with the city adding about two additional acres to each elementary school and then making that into a park, so they would be interlocking, more or less. You would use school playground equipment for the park, and you could have a neighborhood family area there. I was unsuccessful with this, but I worked on it for a number of years. And then, lo and behold, all of a sudden people

became park-conscious. Washoe County and the city of Reno and the city of Sparks—and nationally, for all of that—people realized with the increased population that areas for recreation are closing, becoming more difficult to secure. Now, it is quite easy to work toward setting up park areas.

I was very fortunate in being put on a committee in what we have called, for want of a better name, the Northwest Park, where the school district and the city have cooperated. We received a grant of \$250,000 from the Fleischmann Foundation. We're trying to put in a park in the northwest; it will cover about twenty acres and will be quite a park when it's completed. Unfortunately, when we opened first bids on it the bid was \$309,000. We have \$192,000, so we're re-bidding the whole thing. We're not going to make any basic changes in the park, but we think we can get a bid within our money. We think it will set a good example of a cooperative effort.

I'm hopeful that the Northwest Park can develop, because I have long been an advocate of the fact that a lot of education goes on on a playground. We have never had enough supervision of our playgrounds, and not enough creative program in the playgrounds. I think a lot of citizenship is taught on the playground; the give and take, and all that type of .thing. If my observation of the average college student is true, I think there's a lack of give and take on the part of some of them. And on the part of people generally. A lot of it can be developed in a good play program. I would like to see the schools have a better play program. I think we have a good one, but you can always improve. I still hold my enthusiasm for it. I hope to be chairman of the Recreation Commission next spring, and I plan to put in considerable time on that and see if we can't coordinate a number of programs.

I might mention another thing this old city council did just prior to their going out. I don't know why they were angry at the Recreation Commission, we set up an overall program for recreation and an overall park program to try to work with them. They wouldn't work with us. So just before their term of office expired and this new election came up, and they knew they were out, they passed an ordinance establishing a Park and Horticultural Commission, which would establish parks in the community. It is my personal feeling, and it is the feeling of the Recreation Commission, that this was more or less a spite move. It's a feeling on the Commission that with the price of property at the present time, any park we establish cannot be set up only as a park where you have trees and lawns and seats for people to sit on. It has to be both a family area and an activity area. We feel that in any plan that's proposed, we should be able to meet with the Park and Horticultural Commission and work out plans. Then with the establishment of these, we should have activity periods, and get some beauty in the park. I think they have an area where their advice would be very, very worthwhile. I don't think they should have gone on alone, because they do not know the recreational needs. Even the average Dark planner does not know all the answers to everything. You've got to have your individuals who know the needs and give some advice.

I am inclined to think that eventually what we should go into is a city-Washoe County overall setup that will plan the activities of the whole area. I think we should go into that because its growing and there's going to be more and more need for it. You can't set up a neighborhood park; such a thing as a neighborhood park becomes a community park.

The main reason is that the neighborhood deteriorates. In other words, the young people leave the neighborhood, grow up and the old folks stay there, so you get different needs at different times. You have to set up a park to take care of the family needs, but you also have to set it up so you take care of more than the neighborhood needs. Otherwise, you're going to have great losses. I think this particular area of work has tremendous importance for the future and I hope we can get the thing on an even keel and really go ahead and progress in Reno.

I was presented a life membership in the Congress of PTA, which I regard very highly and I served as president of the Nevada Society for Crippled Children in its early days.

I was Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army for the state of Nevada from 1954 to 1964, which was a very enriching experience. It gave me the opportunity to get almost a preview of matters concerning the nation in terms of broad national scope; it was a very rewarding experience.

I was given the Distinguished Service Award by the Nevada State Education Association in 1958.

The school board honored me by naming the Wooster High School after me; and, believe it, or not, I am almost as proud, if not more proud, of having the students at Wooster High School name the honor society after me. The reason I feel so proud of it is that I feel that schools are set up for education. When they named their student honor society, which embodies good educational achievement, after me, I was certainly pleased.

I was made chairman of the Committee of One Thousand for the charter change in Reno, and worked on that for two years. We finally effected the charter change. This was brought about first by a bill presented to the legislature by Assemblyman James Bailey

to change the Reno charter from electing councilmen from wards to electing them at large. There were many of us in Reno who felt that this would be quite an advantage to the community, because when councilmen are elected at large, their responsibility is toward the community, and not toward a certain ward. We felt very definitely that they would look at the community as a whole. A group got together and had some discussions on it informally and I was selected to chair this committee for rather unique reasons. One reason was that I had no obligations to anybody in the community; I was completely free of possible charges that I had any financial areas that would be of advantage to me if the changes were made. They felt that I would be the proper man to head it up for that reason; or at least that was one of the reasons.

I headed this committee and we went about setting forth a campaign to bring out the virtues of this change. I went before one dissident organization (we appeared before groups to present the proposal to them) to speak at the Riverside Hotel. The agreement was that when I went there, we'd make our presentation, then any questions to be asked would be in writing. I got there, made the presentation, and then I was informed the board of directors didn't want to go along with the rule; that they'd changed it, and that they could ask questions from the floor. Immediately, people got up making speeches, accusing, doing everything under the sun. I was really pinned to the cross on that one! I had tried to set it up properly, knowing that this might happen. What I should've done was to withdraw, and then tell them that they hadn't followed their commitments, and that I would not participate any further in it.

We were given the opportunity later on to come back on this, because they had brought in a "red herring" about a community in

Texas. The Texas city had gone into this type of program. The taxes were high, and all the problems that they had there were severe. So I wrote to the Chamber of Commerce of that community and found out that the people were very happy with the system, and that they were planning on expanding it into the county. They gave me a large amount of information on it. When we held another public meeting and one of these people came in to harass the meeting, the minute he got up and brought this up, I said, "It just happened I had a letter from the Chamber of Commerce here." I read this, and he got up and left the meeting. And we had no more trouble on that score!

Then, I was made chairman of a Committee of Fifty to try to select some responsible citizens to run for the City Council, to establish a good government. And I think Reno does have an outstanding City Council at the present time.

It's rather interesting in regard to this committee for the selection of candidates to run for the City Council. We formed a committee of fifty and we set up certain procedures—I'm a great believer that when you go into a thing, that you should set up procedures and objectives, and some of the details so that you don't wander from them. We set up the proposition, within this group of fifty trying to select candidates, that we would go out and solicit money for the candidacies, that they wouldn't know who gave them the money, and that there would be no obligation whatsoever on their part. (That was guaranteed.) The standards were set very high, and for that reason, we were able to get some people that we would not otherwise have had to run for office.

It's always interesting to notice, when you get into a thing of that kind, that, all of a sudden, some of the other candidates find

that, although they're accepting money from questionable sources, they get on their moral high horse. And all of a sudden, you find that you're supposed to be heading a bunch of crooks! And that happened in this case. We were charged with every crime under the sun: we were trying to influence the candidates, we were getting money under false pretenses, etc.

The actual facts of the matter are that when I walked down the street on several different occasions, I had a citizen press a hundred-dollar bill in my hand and say, "Use this for the campaign." It was very, very easy for us to get money. In the primary election, we raised a considerable sum of money and, of all that money we raised, only \$100 of it came from any gambling institution. The business people in the community were interested in having a good government, and, I might say for the gamblers, that they were interested in a good government, too. They wanted this form of government, too. They wanted this form of government so that no one man would have the power of vetoing anything. That would make it much more difficult to corrupt the government. That was the reason the gamblers were interested in it. Their motives may have been personal motives, but, nevertheless, their objectives were very fine. I have respected them for that attitude they took on it. Some of the members of the Committee of Fifty were Ben Edwards; Don Robertson; the Justice of the Peace, Justice William Beemer; Al Solari; Bill Ligon, an insurance man who was very active in it; George Southworth, Sr.; Barney Lowe from the Power company; Jordan Crouch of the First National Bank (the bank doesn't want any names mentioned in that because they don't want to be openly participating in politics); and Silas E. Ross. Many of these people don't want their names published—although we did publish a list of names—we were accused of having a secret

committee—with two or three exceptions (and the exceptions were because it would not get a good public reaction) People would feel there was something going on there that actually was not. (They were all well-known in the community, and shared these attitudes.) They were all what I would consider—I don't want to use the word "leading citizens", but good citizens, and they were interested in good government.

On one occasion, a man came down from Lake Tahoe and gave me \$100. He wasn't connected with Reno at all, but he said, "I like to see good Government and, for heaven's sake, that council ought to be cleaned out and the government improved." So he gave me a \$100 bill. We often had that type of thing happen; it was very interesting.

Now, what it is going to take, though, the thing that democratic government always takes, is an alertness on the part of the Citizens to try to continue to get good people to run for governmental office. And I might add that I do not agree with the present Reno City Council on everything they've done, but I think they're a very fine council. I think it would be foolish to ever expect that you could agree completely with any group of people trying to solve the number of problems the City Council has. I think it would just be asinine to think that, and I think it's probably healthy that I don't agree with everything they've done. I think it's a healthy thing when you have differences of opinion of problems. The most stifling and deadly thing in the world would be when all people agree on all things. I think you can disagree and still be agreeable in your disagreements. I think that's the way that our government should run, and most of our affairs should run. One of the weaknesses in America right now is the fact that people don't have courage enough to stand up and express themselves in honest opinions.

When I was superintendent and went out to PTA's and on speaking engagements, one point I always made was to allow people to ask questions, and I always made this point—that there is no such a thing as a foolish question, if it was asked honestly. If the intent was honest, there was no such thing as a foolish question. And I don't think there is, because lots of times you'll have information, and to you the question may sound foolish, but to the person asking it, if his intent is good, it is not a foolish question, and he should be shown courtesy and the question answered.

In 1964, I was given the Gracious Living Award. I don't know how much of an honor that was, but I accepted it with considerable pleasure.

That, probably encompassed most of the recognitions I have had in terms of service. I'm still very interested in the community and national affairs, and I feel that, for a democratic government, we need a large number of people who are interested and willing to work free of charge.

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## CONCLUSION

Basically, these are some of the things I've been interested in, and some of the awards I've had for having been interested in them.

I'd say that my basic philosophy of life is to look for the good things in life, and you'll find them; if you look for the bad things, you'll also find them. Mrs. Wooster and I both, when we were married, agreed we'd look for the good things. And this philosophy has worked out well.

When we went out to Wells, Nevada, it had one tree in the town. It was very isolated and remote community, but we looked for the good things there. We found a good student body; we found a lot of good people. We had a very happy four years there. We went to Winnemucca and did the same thing, and we had a very happy time there. We came to Reno and did the same thing, and we have had a very happy life, I think, partly through that philosophy.

There are lots of good people in the world; if you look for them, you can find them. There also are quite a few of the other type, but you can ignore them, and if you find the good

people, you can be happy with them. I think you can extend this philosophy to your work. I think of one teacher I had one time at Reno High School. He was complaining about poor students and everything else. I called him in and Sat down and talked to him for a while, and told him that I'd like to have him take one day and just count the good students he had that day. That afternoon he came in to see me after school with a smile on his face, and he said, "This is the happiest day I've had in my teaching career. I think that little talk you gave me about looking for the good students was probably the greatest educational lecture I've ever had."

It does work. I found out that very frequently teachers would center attention on the problem students instead of centering their attention on the good students and trying to help the good students. My philosophy in regard to problem children is to look for the good child and try to help the good child, and if you do that, you'll keep the good children good, and you'll increase the number of good children; whereas, if you're trying to help only

the problem children, looking toward them, you're very apt to increase them, and you will not accomplish your purpose.

In the Kiwanis Club, they have a program for problem children, and I told them that they would do more good if they tried to work with the good students to set up objectives for all students. For instance, in Reno High School once the students took a day to clean up the grounds; they planted some trees in front of the building; they tried to improve the property. I told the Kiwanis Club that for a stamp and a letter to the student body, they'd do more good in encouraging the good students than they would spending a thousand dollars on the problem child. I still think that's very true; that if we concentrated more—the service clubs of Reno, and the citizens of Reno—on looking toward the schools and encouraging good students in the things they are doing, we would do more to eliminate the problem child than in any other one way. I still think that's true. If we would just arrive at that conclusion and work toward that objective, I think we'd find that we'd have more and more children wanting to be good.

In my experience in dealing with young people, I've found you can accomplish more by encouraging the good student than you can by concentrating on the problem child. As principal of the high school, before we had counselors, I spent 95 percent of my time with the problem children, children who constitute five percent of the student body, but I thought that I accomplished more in the small amount of time I had for the good students.

This, I guess, about covers my experiences and philosophy.

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